HISTORICAL and FAMILIAR

ESSAYS,

ON THE

Scriptures

OF THE

Old Testament.

By JOHN COLLIER,
LATE OF CHARTER-HOUSE SQUARE, LONDON;
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"*These* STUDIES *improve Youth, and are*
"*the Embelliſhment and Joy of Age, they add Grace*
"*and Dignity to Proſperity, and afford the ſureſt*
"*Refuge and Conſolation in Adverſity, they delight*
"*us at Home, and are no hindrance to Enjoyment*
"*Abroad, they go to Bed with us, Travel with*
"*us, and are our Companions in the Country.*"

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AN INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS TO THE READER.

AFTER the Deſtruction, total Overthrow, and Extirpation of its ancient Inhabitants, the Land of CANAAN roſe to Dignity, Opulence, and Power. It exhibited, under the Jewiſh Monarchy, a new Scene of Magnificence and Splendour, became the politeſt and moſt celebrated Court in the Univerſe, the Seat of Empire and of Glory.

Its Hiſtory, its matchleſs Fertility, diſtinguiſhed Honours, Cuſtoms, Uſages and Laws, its Religion and Government are the Subjects of theſe ESSAYS.

Every ſerious Attempt to improve the riſing Generation, however puerile, viewed as an Encouragement to Virtue, and a Means of ſuppreſſing Vice and Immorality, will meet a candid Reception and Support. Some abler Pen, a Friend to Youth and Innocence, on ſuch a Foundation may erect a Superſtructure of rational Enquiry, and reſcue the untutored Mind from Prejudice, Error, and Superſtition.

And in a Country ſo divinely bleſſed, where Virtue is foſtered and cheriſhed at the Throne, and its influence enforced by Example, we may cheerfully look for Succeſs.

To my numerous Friends, whoſe reſpectful Notice, has crowned my days with Honour and added happineſs to exiſtence, now (in lifes decline) I humbly offer a tribute of Labour and Love.

What afforded me Pleaſure in Solitude and Retirement, I was deſirous of communicating to Others. Would to God, it might impart comfort to a ſorrowing Mind, by wiſely and uſefully employing it, and enliſt in the purſuit of Religious Knowledge, the Hour of Diſſipation or Indulgence.

All under ſufferings, I would with earneſtneſs perſuade to read and ſtudy the Holy Scriptures. Extraordinary Events excite our wonder and aſtoniſhment in proportion to the Credit they deſerve, but the Sacred Hiſtorian, reverentially looked up to, will intereſt you moſt wonderfully of all, for of Hiſtories true or fictious, none is ſo awfully curious, affecting and delightful, none ſo ſimply told and ſo Authentic.

Conſcious of their dignity, the Inſpired Prophets, and venerable Sages of Antiquity, deſcribe Characters and Paſſions,

juſt as they beheld them, without Flattery or Diſguiſe. The Vicious and Ungodly (be their ſtations encircled in royalty, or their Memoirs ever ſo heroic) are uſhered in with a Regret, on purpoſe to be condemned and exhibit a picture of abhorrence. While virtuous Actions, the Deeds of the Righteous are here regiſtered, become a part of Holy Writ, and are honourably applauded for ever.

Theſe Sacred Records, This very firſt Book ever wrote furniſhes us with Examples, the wiſeſt Maxims, Precepts and Rules of Life, the graceful Ornament of Youth, and they add Dignity to riper Years, and Veneration and Reſpect to Age.

From referring Events and Tranſactions only to a firſt Cauſe, and over-looking intermediate and more ordinary Ones, ſome have thought the Jewiſh Hiſtory not founded on the Principles of others, and incapa-

ble

ble of being examined by their general Rules and Laws. Memorable and highly aſtoniſhing Revolutions of Kingdoms and Empires were brought about viſibly, and moſt conſpicuouſly, by the Hand of the Almighty, and you muſt read ſuch Illuſtrious Annals with the profoundeſt Reverence and Awe; but the Iſraelites conſidered as a People, their gradual Progreſs as a Nation, their Principles, Manners, Cuſtoms, Government, Revolutions, Forces and Revenues very much correſpond with thoſe of others.

Throughout every Age, Human Nature is ſeen maintaining its rank in the Creation, improving with Arts and Science. A Period ſo dark, clouded, and unknown, Mankind in Infancy, the rude beginnings of Order and Civilization in very ſlow Progreſſion, beſpeaks your Candour, and muſt be viewed under much Diſtruſt and Obſcurity.

The

The HEBREWS, an immenſe Body of People, confined to a Corner only of the World, and but lately let looſe from the Houſe of Bondage, a Rabble of Slaves, under Pagan Prejudices, Ignorant and uncultivated, you look back on their flouriſhing Hiſtory, and ſpeedy Advancement with Surprize; the Tribe of Judah only had more than Fifty Capital Towns.

The Natural, very ſlow progreſs of Light and Knowledge in Countries and Kingdoms, compared with the rapid Advance it made among the Iſraelites is wonderful, you will read of it among them, far more uſefully diffuſed, than in the Hiſtory of any other Nation or Empire in the World, and this ſuperior Light burſt forth at a Time, when the Jewiſh Laws ſtrictly forbad all Union and Connections with Foreign Kingdoms, all National Intercourſe whatever, and muſt confeſſedly be aſcribed to their Religious Advantages, obviouſly influential

fluential in introducing among them a Knowledge of Science, the uſeful Branches of Mechanics, Geometry and the Mathematics, ſeen firſt in Altars, Monuments and Pillars, and afterwards ſo aſtoniſhingly diſplayed on Mount Moriah, in the conſtruction of Magnificent Palaces and Temples, the Court of Audience, the celebrated Porch, and Splendid Throne of Solomon.

The State of Arts and Sciences, at that early Period, is accurately deſcribed by the Prophet Ezekiel and in the Book of Kings, more than a Thouſand Years before the Birth of our Saviour.

In Elegance of Language, and Beauty of Compoſition, the Jews held a high Preeminence. Homer and Heſiod were contemporaries with David, but Moſes wrote his Hiſtory four Centuries before, and Moſes's Song, although the moſt ancient,

is the ſublimeſt piece of Poetry in the World. The Pſalms of David, (only four Hundred Years after) are unequalled in Magnanimity and Sweetneſs, Praiſes and Thankſgivings, irreſiſtibly engaging you in Converſe with God.

Solomon ſhone the firſt Moraliſt and Literary Character, but do you not give the Preference to the Book of Job? Where Sentiment (although ſtrip't of its rich Attire and Poetic Sweetneſs) flows in a ſwelling Tide of Majeſty, the Embelliſhment of Literature, the Model of Sublime. Were we aſked for a Specimen of the Dignities and Beauties of Jewiſh Authors, the Propheſies of Iſaiah, are uttered in enraptured Strains, divinely impreſſive, and a Loftineſs and Grandeur, an animated Stile abounding with Imagery and the boldeſt Figures, characterizes the writings of all the Leſſer Prophets, diſtinguiſhed by their Spirit, Impetuoſity and Eloquence.

In another point of view, the Hiſtory will ſtrike you with freſh Wonder, on a ſurvey of the Wiſdom of God, and the Ways of Providence conducting the Iſraelite to Conqueſt and Empire. Tracing the finger of the Almighty ſelecting out his Inſtrument, protecting the Innocent and exalting the Humble, executing his Vengeance on the Guilty, though encircled in the higheſt Dignities, bringing about his wiſe Deſigns, by ſecret influence on the Mind, or by open and awful tokens of Diſpleaſure, ſtriking the Aſſaſſin dead, diſtracting him with Terror, or caſting him out a loathſome Leper. At one Time, ſending Famine or Peſtilence upon a People, whom no kindneſs could reclaim, or raining down fire and brimſtone on a City and its Inhabitants. At another Time, mercifully ſparing the Multitude, but ſingling out the Ring-leader and moſt obſtinate Revolters, cauſing them to hear his

voice in the Thunder, or opening the Earth to ſwallow them up. How great our ſurprize, when He laid bare His Arm, and conducted the Iſraelites, all on foot, through the the Red Sea, to the Wilderneſs of Etham, and drowned an Egyptian Prince, and his Mighty Hoſt purſuing them. More then once, deſtroying by Tempeſt a Philiſtine Army in full view of the Armies of Iſrael. With perfect eaſe effecting his deſigns, throwing a Multitude into a panick, making them their own deſtroyers. Thus allotting Victory to Iſrael, even when ſhe had not drawn a Sword. His People, he ſent, to gather up the Spoil, and three whole days they gathered it.

So illuſtriouſly do theſe Annals diſplay the irreſiſtible Power and the Majeſty of God, his never ceaſing Providence and juſt Severity.

Throughout

Throughout the Jewiſh Hiſtory, Virtue is in this Life diſtinguiſhingly rewarded, and Vice is almoſt always puniſhed. The Jew was therefore depreſſed under ſufferings, he could only ſorrow in Adverſity, it is the Privilege of the Chriſtian and his Glory to rejoice.

Though I can never ſpeak too highly of the Religious advantages of the Iſraelite, nor enough venerate the glorious manifeſtation and extraordinary Providence with which he was bleſſed, yet the Religion preſcribed him was ceremonious, and Jewiſh Ceremonies, in their Pomp and Splendour, reſembled Pagan. A part of it was called the Ceremonial Law, and intended, by degrees, to uſher in the Chriſtian Æra.

It was a figure only, expreſsly called a Shadow of good things to come. St. Paul reſembles the Jewiſh Worſhip to a State of Infancy, Rites and Ceremonies adapted to

the Capacities of Children. The true Light, here kindled and preſerved, was to blaze out at a diſtant Period, be gradually diffuſed over the World, and advance more and more to the Majeſty and full luſtre of meridian Day. The Jew had no clear Idea of pure and ſpiritual Devotion, he had witneſſed the Pageantry of Pagan Ceremonies, viſible objects of his worſhip, and Ceremony with the Jew was a rivited prejudice, as congenial with his Ideas, as Fluidity with his Rivers, or Light with Day. He could never raiſe his thoughts to the contemplation of a pure Spirit, unſeen and incomprehenſible. One Supreme Father of all, ever preſent in Power and yet no where in appearance was far above his conception. Something of ſhape and figure, was a God more familiar to him, eaſier known, one that aided his fancy, and (as he thought) excited Devotion; ſuch he had every day witneſſed in Egypt. Hence, throughout their

their whole Hiſtory, you will notice a wonderful prone-neſs to Idolatry, and the high Offence it gave; they found it a Religion eaſy to practiſe, what the vicious and moſt abandoned could follow, Pagan worſhip requiring no Morality, favoured all their paſſions, was friendly and alluring to their vices, to their darling and moſt criminal indulgencies.

An oſtenſible part of the Jewiſh worſhip was Sacrifice. As Farmers and Herdſmen much of the riches of the People conſiſted in their Cattle, and by offering up a part of their food and property to God, they acknowledged his Gifts and Superintendency. But Sacrifices were alſo Fines and Puniſhments, Sin was hereby made chargeable and coſtly to the Tranſgreſſor. The placability of God was pleaſingly exhibited in his acceptance of the offering, and thus allaying the fears, and quieting the conſcience of the penitent offender. Some Sacrifices were called

Thankſ-

Thankſgivings, and then the offender collected his Friends and made a feaſt; a part of the fat was burnt on the Altar, one joint was a fee belonging to the Prieſt, and all the reſt eat up with his Party. Emblematically they exhibited the odious nature of ſin, ſo deſerving of death, and by an apt figure they held up, in perpetual view, the Lamb of God, the Sacrifice for the Sins of the World, hereafter to be made. Without the Death of Chriſt, how unmeaning the Pomp and Splendour of Jewiſh Ceremonies?

Another part of their Religion was commemorative Feaſts and Solemn Faſts. The Tabernacle Feaſt reminded them of their long Journey through the Wilderneſs, the Paſs-over, of their merciful Eſcape, when God ſmote the firſt born of Egypt. The Feaſt of Trumpets perpetuated the awful manner of giving the Law from Mount Sinai, and Pentecoſt was an acknowledg-

ment

ment of the All-bounteous Giver, by offering him, the firſt fruits, of the year, of the Land of CANAAN.

Having ventured to mention the Extraordinary Providence exerciſed over the Jew, and alſo his Religion, I am deſcending to Manners, Dreſs, Cuſtoms, Uſages, and Modes of Life to familiarize his Character to the Young, before they examine his Hiſtory, his Laws and Government.

The Splendour of his City, Magnificence of his Palaces, and the Temple of his God are repeatedly diſplayed by the Sacred Hiſtorians.

Among the very poor, the Jewiſh garments were Hides, and dreſſes made of Sheep-ſkins and Goat-ſkins, Hair-cloth, coarſe Hemp, whereof Sack-cloth was made, the deep and uſual mourning of the Jew. But the richer were clad in fine linen, in ſilks, woollen clothes and rich embroid-

embroideries; by expreſs orders all of them wore fringes, a memorial of the Law of Jehovah which they were commanded to do. The Women were covered over with a Veil, and it was eſteemed always immodeſt to appear abroad without one.

Of all colours, white was what they prized moſt, next to that blew, or ſky colour, but on the change of Government and Reign of the Kings, Princes and Officers of the Houſehold and Army began to wear more ſhowy Colours, and Saul cloathed the Daughters of Iſrael in ſcarlet, others were dreſſed in crimſon, and the richeſt of all was purple.

The Grecian, and the Roman dreſs, is handed down to us in buſts and pictures, but no figure or reſemblance of a Jew was ever made. The Woman of faſhion was clad in needle work, or rich ſtuffs from Tyre, they wore Jewels, and among other orna-

ornaments, a tinkling bell on each leg, which gave a muſical cadence to their ſteps.

The Mens dreſs conſiſted of a tunic and drawers of linen, and an upper garment like a looſe cloak, occaſionally wrapt round, and confined by a girdle, and on that girdle, hung his money bag. The upper garment, the Jew could never pawn for longer than the day, at night the pledge was always reſtored, for it was his blanket and night covering.

The Gallantry of the Jew did not conſiſt in the faſhion of his dreſs, but his number of changes, bright colours, rich fringes and embroideries. A fond Father decked his favourite boy in a coat of many colours, rainbow like, and at his wedding arrayed him in all his gaieſt ornaments, encircled him with flambeaus, and led him through the ſtreets of Jeruſalem. Thus, at midnight, was the Bridegroom, and his gla-

ring lights, like a riſing Sun, uſhered out from his chamber with his friends.

After Marriage the Jew had one year allowed him to live at home, he was ever afterwards liable to be ſummoned to the field, to repair to the place of general rendezvous, and bring a month's Proviſion with him; every Tribe was a little Common-wealth within itſelf, and the whole People of Iſrael, may be looked upon, as a body of Militia, trained up in War, and in time of Peace, employed in Agriculture.

After it became a Monarchy, the King uſually was his own General, headed his Army, and his firſt Officer was ſtiled, his Commander in Chief, then the Princes or Chiefs of the Tribes, Captains of thouſands, Captains of hundreds, of fifties, of tens and of threes, and the Muſter-maſters were called Scribes.

Moſes had trained up his People to Arms, but it was intended only to put

them

them in poſſeſſion of peace and enjoyment, when, after the diviſion of the Lands, every one was directed to farm his own Eſtate, prune his own Vine and plough his field. The reward held out to the Jew was a quiet life, a peaceful ſitting under his Vine and his Fig-tree, neither gold, nor ſilver, nor ſtately houſes were promiſed him, but the former and the latter rain, plentiful ſeaſons, corn, wine and oil, increaſe of Cattle, and a multitude of Children.

All Spectacles, Places of diverſion, and Theatrical repreſentations were forbad the Jew, and every ſpecies of Gaming. No gain was lawful that depended on chance. Their Convocations and ſolemn Feſtivals were their grand amuſement, ſuch were frequently occuring, and moſt magnificently kept; at theſe Feaſts, beſides eating and drinking, the bands of Jewiſh Muſic elegantly played, and the voices all ſtruck

up harmonious, and detached parties were leading the dance in high feſtivity and joy.

A Vintage Feaſt, Harveſt and Sheep-ſhearing Feaſts, were perpetually in family rotation. Except on theſe ſeaſons of merriment and hoſpitality, the ordinary diet of the Jew, was ſimple and plain. Pulſe a (ſort of Potatoe), parched corn, bread dipped in vinegar, raiſons, figs, milk, honey and ſome fleſh, the firſt and moſt dainty treat, was a fatted calf.

The High-Prieſt was the Title neareſt allied to royalty; Splendid Titles were unknown among them, Recorder, Treaſurer, Counſellor, Judge, General-Officers, but the more uſual were Chiefs and Elders and Scribes.

The Prophets and Propheteſſes were venerated, almoſt all of them God-like and moſt exalted characters, looked up to, as the

eſtabliſhed

eſtabliſhed Oracles of their Country, awful and highly important Meſſengers, and conſulted on all emergencies.

Seaſons of mourning, were expreſſive of real grief, and ſore diſtreſs. They began with tearing ther cloaths to pieces, uncovering their heads, ſmiting their breaſts, plucking off their hair, putting aſhes on their heads, walking bare-foot, wearing ſack-cloath next the ſkin, and lying on the bare ground. Immediately on a perſon's death, all his relations in this mournful plight repaired to the houſe, ſat themſelves down on the ground in profound ſilence, nothing was heard but ſighs, and a funeral ditty, piped on ſome inſtrument by the Undertaker and his Men. They had witneſſed the Ceremony of Embalment in Egypt, and it was practiſed among the rich, but a poor man's body was only waſhed. The Mourners never left the houſe until the corpſe was buried, and whatever

whatever they eat or drank, was brought them on the ground.

To this tedious detail of Jewiſh Cuſtoms, permit me to add a ſhort account of their Trade, although until the reign of Solomon, they never ſeem to have ſet a high value on Merchandize.

The HEBREWS had long been eyewitneſſes to its many advantages. By the Red Sea the Egyptians carried on a large traffick to all the known parts of the Eaſt, and when the Iſraelites were ſettled in Canaan, they had an opportunity of viewing the Sea trade of the Phænicians, and the immenſe treaſures they acquired. Some of the Tribes, Zebulon in particular, extended on the Weſt, even to the ſhore of the Mediterranean Sea, and almoſt to the very gates of Sidon; they muſt therefore have noticed the inhabitants of that great City, ſo famous for its navigation, bring home

home from time to time, their riches, and moſt likely would be tempted to take a part with them. Joppa ſerved as a Port to Judæa and Jeruſalem, and Solomon made uſe of it to import the materials for his buildings; for this wiſe Prince, ſent to King Hiram, for a number of his moſt ſkilful workmen in metals, ſtone and wood, Founders, Maſons, Carvers and Architects, and then raiſed a Levy of thirty thouſand Iſraelites no doubt to be inſtructed by them, for the curious part of all the work was wrought on the Plains of Jordan.

At that time all the Oriental Coaſt of Africa went under the general name of Ophir, and all the Weſtern Coaſt of Africa and Spain was then called Tarſhiſh, but we do not hear of the HEBREWS having much diſtant Commerce by Sea before the Navigation regularly carried on in the reign of Solomon. There were then two Fleets, one ſailed from Tyre under the inſpection

of

of King Hiram, in which Solomon had a ſhare, and the other was more directly fitted out by the Iſraelites.

Theſe Fleets ſailed through the ſtraits of Gibralter quite to Guinea.

Solomon carried on a Traffick with the Spice Merchants in Arabia and the South, and another profitable Merchandize with the inhabitants in the North, and he traded largely to Egypt for Linens, Yarns, Horſes and Carriages.

Although the Jewiſh Territories were ſo ſmall, the HEBREWS ſo very numerous, and their Sabbatic year deprived them of the produce of one year in ſeven, yet they exported great quantities of Corn, Oil, Honey, Wine, and Fruits to Tyre and other Countries

The Nations who were tributary to them, paid their tribute in ſuch Commodities, as their Country abounded with, either for food

food or raiment, and the annual Tribute to Iſrael, from Meſha King of Moab was, one hundred thouſand Lambs, and as many Rams with their wool.

The Additions are large to the Hiſtorical Parts, as in our Bibles, enough is not told of the reigns of ſome of the Jewiſh Kings, to intereſt you in their Story, for the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah and Iſrael, ſo often referred to, is loſt. A very humble attempt is made to ſeparate their Reigns, occaſioning much repetition, and ſometimes (it muſt be allowed) obſcuring the Period. Their characters, here enlarged, are held up for imitation, or portraits of Vice and Deformity.

The Iſraelitiſh Hiſtory, as conveyed down to us in the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, finiſhes with the Book of Eſther, in a very conciſe and moſt ſuperficial manner, it is here carried on to

the death of Herod, introductory to the Birth of Our Saviour, ſoon after whoſe Death, God choſe to puniſh the Jews by putting an end to their Polity, a total deſtruction of their City, and extinction to their Empire.

Some parts of theſe Eſſays, pointed out to the Young, in the new and wiſe inſtitutions of Sunday Schools, might prove of advantage to them. The Seaſon of Youth, is a Seaſon of diſcipline, lively, ſincere, modeſt and reſpectful. Unprejudiced, and unrobbed of its innocence, the Mind is open and diſpoſed to conviction, warmly glows with events and the intereſts of others, and when once you have fixed their attention, they are all on the liſten to improve.

My firſt view in writing them centred at home, and I feel much depreſſed at their appearance abroad. Unequal are all my powers

powers and endeavours to deſcribe this once happy Country, long deſolate and forlorn, its ancient manners, uſages, and laws, a People once ſo highly favoured, Revolutions brought about by Infinite Wiſdom, and executed by Almighty Power.

I ſurvey the attempt with the profoundeſt reverence, ſelf-abaſement, and anxiety.

My day of life far ſpent, and nothing, to me, of importance left, but how to cloſe the ſcene with honour and uſefulneſs. My reward already received. I am offering my Mite (all I have to give) to encourage the Reading of the Holy Scriptures.

My Young Friends, ſearch for yourſelves, there is a bleſſing annexed to your labour.

The Hiſtory, is in part wrote, by a Faithful Hiſtorian, the Iſraelitiſh Lawgiver, graced with the Wiſdom of the Stateſman, the Elegance and ſweetneſs of

the Poet, and Authors have atteſted, that,

" There is nothing ſo ſweet, ſo tender and
" pathetic, and at the ſame time nothing
" ſo grand, ſo Majeſtic, ſo terrible, and ſo
" harmonious, as the Poetic parts of the
" Old Teſtament."

What will endear to you the memory of this firſt Jewiſh Prince, This Illuſtrious Chief, is his exemplary Piety, that ſtriking feature, by which alone (at a time when Courage and Conduct ſtood him in no ſtead) he ſo often reſcued his People from Deſtruction, inſpired them with Glory, and led them on to Conqueſt and Empire.

Permit me to conclude by reminding my Reader of the very wonderful Patronage, ſtill viſibly upholding the Iſraelite. After the ravage of Peſtilence, Earthquake, and Famine, of Wars, Maſſacres, and Perſecutions, the Diſperſed and Vanquiſhed Jew (looking to a once-more happy union) are,

are, to the number of three million, by the Providence of God yet ſignally preſerved, Strangers no where, Traficking every where, the Money-holders and Brokers of a World. Thus the Jew exiſts, diſtinct, unmixed, ſurviving all his Conquerors, enacting no one law, electing no Magiſtrate, enjoying no where the full exerciſe of his religion, incorporated with no one Nation Kingdom or Empire, yet guarded, and licenſed, and admitted amongſt them all.

POST-SCRIPT.

POSTSCRIPT.

FRANKLY to confeſs, that in the moſt unreſerved manner, I have availed myſelf of ſuch ſources of Information as my Situation afforded me, that I have freely borrowed from Books, and diligently ſought materials for my Eſſays from Authors, publick Lectures, and Converſation.

The Indulgence of my Friends with earneſtneſs I ſolicit, their Kindneſs I moſt gratefully acknowledge.

While I have held up to view ſome Characters highly glorious and exemplary, it has been my fate to introduce others, which ſeem only to have been written in blood.

The Book is deſigned for the Young, the attention of the ſerious hopeful Youth the prize ambitiouſly

ously contended for. To engage him in pursuits rational and delightful—Give him a present pleasure—ensure him a still greater reward in future—and a peace and joy which no other Retrospect could ever yield him. Thus, and Thus only, is he thrice blessed, and progressively to advance through endless Ages of Divine Improvement, Self-approbation, and Happiness.

As yet unprejudiced, the Young may with candour accept an arrangement of Ancient History methodised for their perusal, and the attempt (however humble) to point out many Beauties they perhaps may have forgot. 'Tis surely an ample field for Emulation, and it would give me real pleasure to rescue from obscurity any one of the Elegancies of Sacred History yet unnoticed, and invite them to assist me in pursuing the enquiry.

" FULL *many a Gem of purest ray serene,*
" *The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:*
" FULL *many a flower is born to blush unseen,*
" *And waste its sweetness in the desert air.*

GRAY.

2 DE 64

ESSAY I.

ON

JUDÆA.

THE ISRAELITES were ſeparated from amidſt an Idolatrous World, to preſerve the knowledge of the One ſupreme GOD, the Father of All, and the purity of his Worſhip, while all the Nations around them were *Idolaters*.

The *Jewiſh Territories* altho' of very ſmall Extent, and hid in Solitary obſcurity, unnoticed by Authors who deſcribe the Kingdoms, and all the powerful States around them, yet claim a patient & diſtinguiſhed examination from the multiplicity, Variety, and Extraordinary Tranſactions authentically recorded and highly intereſting.

The Choice allotted them to be God's peculiar People——*Jehovah* was their Judge, Lawgiver, & King——With a high Hand and a ſtretched out Arm, Their Deliverer from Egyptian Bondage—— A Zigzag journey, and of forty years, when the diſtance was ſo ſhort from Egypt to Canaan—Awful ſtrange, and many wonderful Events tending to rectify their errors, diveſt them of prejudice, and educate them for the high honours He intended them——the aſtoniſhing Proof of His Patronage and Power, by laying bare His Arm, making a Paſſage for them through the Red Sea, all on foot to the Wilderneſs of Etham——His feeding in the Deſert this immenſe Multitude day by day—— The viſible appearance of Glory filling the tent where the Ark of God was depoſited, regulating their March, a Cloud by day, a Pillar of fire by night: when this Cloud majeſtically roſe and ſtood over the Tent, *Iſrael's* ſtanding orders were to move forwards under their Divine Protector—— The awful and tremendous Voice of God, pronouncing the Law from *Mount Sinai*, All the People trembled, the Mountain ſmoaked, the Earth ſhook, and the ſmoak aſcended, and a loud Trumpet ſounded.—His Rules of War—a miraculous conqueſt of a Country, populous, warlike, and ſtrongly fortified by Nature and Art.——A wonderful Revolution, an entire new Government,

its

its Polity, diſtinguiſhed advantages, Laws civil and religious, curious, inſtructive and intereſting.

The Scene of all this Glory was JUDÆA.

THIS once happy and highly favoured Spot was firſt peopled by Canaan, Grandſon of Noah, and for more than 400 years called the Land of Promiſe 'till the promiſe was performed, & afterwards 'twas called *Judah*, and *Iſrael*, as conſiſting of theſe two Kingdoms.——JUDÆA, that being the moſt powerful Tribe.——PALESTINE, from the *Philiſtines* its inhabitants.——And the Holy Land, from being the Scene of our SAVIOUR's Paſſion, Humiliation, and Sufferings.

It is ſituated in *Aſia Minor*, on both ſides the River Jordan, bounded on the Weſt by the Mediterranean Sea,—Syria, and Phœnicia, on the North---Arabia Deſerta on the Eaſt, Arabia Petrea on the South, and was intended to take in all that Tract of Country from the Ocean to the river Euphrates. The Wilderneſs was its Limits to the South.——Lebanon North.——The River Euphrates Eaſt——and the Ocean to the Weſt. Between all theſe "Every place whereon the

Soles of your feet ſhall tread, ſhall be yours" ——thus ran the original Edict.

The Country is Mountainous, but beautifully faced with Vale and riſing Ground, cloathed with the Orange and the Citron grove, with Vineyards interſected with Lawn, and Arable in luxuriant crops, and more than once a year. The bud, the bloſſom, and the ripe fruit, on the ſame tree exhibit a variety of beauty. It abounds with the fragrant Balm of Gilead and Apples of Paradiſe by hundreds in a cluſter. Honey ran down in plenty from the Trees, and even from the Rocks, the induſtrious Bee hiving every where. Cotton —Hemp—Flax—and Sugar Canes all grew in great profuſion, hill and vale were in perpetual verdure,——the riſing grounds wooded with the ſweet Cypreſs, Palm-trees, and the ſtately Cedar ——the River Jordan overflowed its banks, luxuriantly fertilizing all the plain. Sea-breezes, and refreſhing Springs, in rivulets, and ſtreams invigorated and beautified a very principal part of this once happy Country. One Acre ſeemed heaped upon another, increaſing its matchleſs fertility. The Prophet *Ezekiel* calls it the glory of all lands, flowing with milk and honey.

It far exceeded in fruitfulneſs the celebrated land of *Egypt*, lying under the fourth and fifth Climates, and its longeſt day was fourteen hours and a quarter—its extent two hundred Miles in length, and not more than four-ſcore in breadth. A Soil ſo luxuriant Moſes alſo deſcribes as flowing with Milk and Honey——A land of brooks and waters, of wheat and barley, of Vines, Figs, Pomgranates, and Oil, and the Vintage was twice and thrice a year, its bowels were Mines of iron, and braſs, and its ſurface rich in paſturage for numerous Flocks and Herds of Cattle great and ſmall.

Fiſh were caught in the greateſt abundance and variety, and a principal Gate of the City Jeruſalem, was called the fiſh-gate.

An adjacent Lake ſupplied them with immenſe quantities of Salt, eſteemed of a moſt excellent quality.

Sacred Hiſtory furniſhes you with proofs, which aſtoniſh you, of the richneſs and fertility of the Soil, and the bill of fare of one Day's conſumption in the Palace, is a glowing picture of Plenty and hoſpitallity.

729 Buſhels of Wheat.
30 Oxen.
100 Sheep with a proportionable

quantity of Veniſon—Poultry—Fiſh and Vegetables.

The daily religious Ceremonies in the Temple, and elſewhere, conſumed much more Cattle, and the Sacrifice offered up at the ſolemn and magnificent dedication of it, was

Two and twenty thouſand Oxen,
One hundred and twenty thouſand Sheep.

The fruitfulneſs of the promiſed Land is accounted for, from "the Serene temperature of the Air, under the North-temperate Zone," the regularity of its Seaſons, "the conſtant fruitful ſhowers of November and April, called the former and the latter Rain, "The natural richneſs and fatneſs of its Soil, requiring no Dung nor Manure, and very little plowing," The overflowing of the River Jordan, annually. ſoon after Eaſter, about the time of the early harveſt," from the encouragement given to huſbandry, every inch of Land was improved, the barren places yielded ſomething, Rocky ground, covered with Mould,

produced

produced corn, pulſe, and paſture, the bleſſing and influence of heaven was every where experienced.

JUDÆA was divided into Maratine and inland, into the mountainous or hilly Country, and Champain and Valley, and as the River Jordan ran acroſs it, into Judæa on this ſide, and beyond Jordan——but a more conſiderable one, was, into twelve Cantons and divided by lot among the twelve Tribes, of which ten and a half were ſeated on one ſide the River, and only two and a half on the other. In the reign of Solomon it was divided a little differently and called the twelve Provinces or Diſtricts, from each of which, an Officer or Steward was, by rotation, deputed monthly to ſupply the Kings-houſehold with Proviſions, each out of his own diſtrict. A more fatal Diviſion was made after Solomon's Death, ten tribes revolted under Jeroboam, who aſſumed the title of King of Iſrael, two Tribes only remained with Reoboam, Son of King Solomon, and he was afterwards ſtiled King of Judah.

In this Diſtrict once flouriſhed the celebrated City of Jeruſalem, divided into four parts, and each was encloſed in its own Walls.

The Old City on Mount Zion, contained a ſuperb Caſtle and the Palace of David——The Lower

Lower City on the ſide of the ſame hill, called the Daughter of Zion, contained two Magnificent Palaces built by Solomon for himſelf and his Queen the Daughter of Pharoah, and a third for the Princes and houſehold, and alſo a ſtately Amphitheatre, capable of containing Eighty thouſand Spectators, and two immenſely ſtrong Fortifications which were called CITADELS.—The third City was called the new City, inhabited by Tradeſmen, Artificers and Merchants—The fourth ſtood on Mount Moriah, and was dignified with the moſt magnificent Temple, the Ornament and Glory of a World, immenſe, of poliſhed Marble, eighty two yards high, and its celebrated Tower, twelve hundred feet.

Under the viſible Diſpleaſure of the *Almighty*, and the Turkiſh Yoke, a ſad and diſmal Change is now experienced in JUDÆA, by far the greateſt part is reduced to a mere Deſert, of its numerous Inhabitants, Millions were ſlain under Titus, thouſands and ten thouſands deſtroyed by Famine and Peſtilence, and the remainder ſold, and diſperſed into almoſt every Clime and Country: and of ſo ſmall eſtimation were they, that the price of four Jews, was only a buſhel of barley. A Sangiac, the preſent Governor reſides in a houſe, ſaid to have been Pontius Pilate's, the

Churches

Churches are Mahometan Moſques, and all the trade of this once flouriſhing and highly favoured City, is beads, relicts, and proviſion for Travellers.

The City reduced to a poor thinly inhabited Town, on a rocky mountain; the Soil ſtoney, ſandy, and barren.

A ſhort lived change (and one we read of with aſtoniſhment) this City experienced under the Emperor Adrian, after Titus had plundered, burnt, and demoliſhed it. The Emperor built a City on its Ruins, and erected a ſtatue of Jupiter over the place of the Reſurrection, a Venus on Mount Calvary, and an Adonis at Bethlehem; and theſe all continued till the Emperor Conſtantine, and his mother Helena, a Britiſh lady, pulled them down, and erected in their ſtead magnificent Churches, now remaining; but the Turks are the maſters, and keep the keys in their poſſeſſion.

New Colonies from diſtant countries re-peopled Judæa.

Inundations of Northern Barbarians, and the blind zeal of Chriſtians encountering with

Mahometans, have completed the ſad and total devaſtation of it. Herds of wild Arabs, living altogether on plunder and depredation, ſeize on all and every thing they meet. The dread and horror of Travellers, inquiſitively viewing ſo diſtinguiſhed a ſpot, and its once famous cities, villages, and towns, now moſt dangerous to reſort to, and moſt comfortleſs to live in.

Of all the other Tribes their very name is loſt, and their memory ſwallowed up in the neighbouring kingdoms, whoſe Princes divided the land, and added it each to his own territories.

ESSAY II.

On the Life of the Patriarch ABRAHAM.

ABRAHAM, the faithful ſervant, and the friend of GOD, was the Son of Terah, a lineal deſcendant of *Noah*.

ABRAHAM was born in Ur, a city of Chaldea, 2097 Years before CHRIST, and 1072 after the Flood.

In the very ancient Statutes of Chaldea it is recorded, "Abraham was a righteous and emi-

" nent man, well ſkilled in celeſtial Science, and " a teacher of Aſtronomy."

By others he has been called a Royal Shepherd; and this highly diſtinguiſhed Character, and venerable Patriarch, was the Father and the Founder of the Jewiſh Empire.

The ſacred Hiſtorian is entirely ſilent as to the early part of his life. He firſt introduces him at the age of ſeventy-four, but fills up all the remaining Period with a minute and moſt entertaining ſucceſſion of domeſtic Anecdotes divinely inſtructive and exemplary.

The firſt thing told of Abraham is his filial Piety and dutiful attendance on his aged parent; who now, at the advanced period of two hundred and five years, removed with all his family and flocks from Chaldea to Haran, a city in Meſopotamia, and the year following died in that country.

It was ſoon after Abraham had paid his laſt due honours to his Father, and attended on his funeral, that GOD commanded him to leave his patrimonial eſtate, and native home, to ſojourn all his life, a pilgrim, in a ſtrange and diſtant country, to which

GOD

God had directed him. And *Moſes*, his hiſtorian, gives a long and intereſting account of his life, travels, trials, and the very wonderful means by which divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs led him by the hand through all, by ſignal and moſt glorious promiſes, preſent bleſſings, extraordinary interpoſitions, deliverances, and ſupport.

Among many, there was one promiſe which highly animated and encouraged Abraham:

"In his offspring all the Nations of the whole "earth ſhould be bleſſed."

And yet the promiſe was made under very apparent ſingular diſcouragements, which occaſioned him to be more thoughtful, and much leſs expecting the bleſſing.

Abraham however inſtantly purſued the orders which were given him; he collected all his herds, and his flocks, and packed up his furniture, houſehold goods, and treaſures; he ſet out on his journey, with his beautiful wife, his ſervants, and his cattle, from Haran, his family reſidence, and travelled through Meſopotamia to the land of the Canaanites; and there, near a populous city, named Sichem, pitched his tents,

and

and ſettled his family abode. Inſtantly on his arrival, he fell proſtrate on the ground, with piety and true devotion he worſhipped GOD, and built an altar for ſacrifice and thankſgiving.

GOD here ſoon appeared again to *Abraham*, and confirmed all his former promiſes, aſſuring him of his protection and ſupport. And God ſaid,

" Caſt now thine eyes all round the horizon, " all you there behold ſhall be given to your poſterity."

At this time, a famine in the land of Canaan occaſioned *Abraham's* removal into Egypt, a country affording a plentiful ſupply for the wants of his family and very numerous flocks. The bleſſing of GOD accompanied *Abraham* there; his cattle greatly increaſed, the Egyptian Prince loaded him with preſents, his herds and his riches are multiplied; but here a new trial, a miſunderſtanding of the Prince, and a domeſtic alarm, produced a new and ſignal interpoſition, and a freſh convinced *Abraham* of the ever watchful care and protection of his GOD.

Pharoah,

Pharoah ſtruck with the highly pleaſing perſon of *Sarah*, and being told ſhe was his ſiſter, and not *Abraham*'s wife, indulged his affections, and made overtures to *Sarah*; who, though at the age of ſixty-five, was ſo exquiſitely beautiful as to endanger the life of any one who paſſed for her huſband——Beauty like her's charmed the Egyptians, and captivated Pharaoh.——

The Prince's meſſage occaſioned an explanation. Pharoah was ſorely and diſtractingly diſappointed, and the King ordered *Abraham* to keep all his rich preſents, but to leave the country, return with his numerous herds, his very beautiful wife, and his ſervants to Bethel, where he was now informed the famine had entirely ceaſed. *Abraham* obeyed, and inſtantly on his arrival devoutly worſhipped God, offering upon his own altar a grateful ſacrifice, recognized afreſh God's many bleſſings, and this his laſt and ſignal deliverance.

Sarah, deſpairing of bearing herſelf a child, according to the cuſtom of that age and country, promoted a connection between her huſband and Hagar, who was her hand-maid; reſolving, rather

ther than not at all, even by proxy, to be a mother.

Hagar, on finding herſelf pregnant, grew haughty, behaved with inſolence, and inſulted her miſtreſs. Upon *Sarah's* remonſtrance, Hagar was treated with ſuch ſeverity, that ſhe choſe rather to leave her ſervice, and ſhe privately left the family, and ſtole away from her miſtreſs.

Hagar took the road towards Egypt, and ſet herſelf down by the ſide of a well near the Town of Sur. In this ſolitary ſituation, an angel appeared to Hagar, and reminded her of the propriety of turning back, making a dutiful ſubmiſſion to her miſtreſs, and acknowledging her fault; and the Angel told her, by way of encouragement, ſhe ſhould ſoon be delivered of a ſon, and he ordered her to name him *Iſhmael.* Her ſon ſhould be valiant and warlike, the father of a mighty nation, but his hands ſhould be againſt every man, and every man's hand againſt him. Upon this comfortable good news, Hagar was determined to go home, and it was not very long after that ſhe was brought to bed of a Son; and as ſhe had been directed, Hagar named him *Iſhmael.* Several tribes of wild Arabs, who lived in tents,

and

and became very numerous, were the offspring of *Iſhmael*; and, as the Angel had foretold, they were fierce, warlike, and lived much upon Rapine.

ABRAHAM, not expecting now another child, at firſt brought up *Iſhmael* as his heir, and the heir of the promiſes. Hagar, hoping it might tend to the advantage of her ſon, carefully concealed all the Angel had told her; and it was thirteen years after when GOD revealed to *Abraham* his further intentions, and promiſed him a ſon by *Sarah* his wife.

Soon after *Abraham*'s return, GOD was pleaſed again to notice him, and renewed all the promiſes He had made him:

" All the land he ſaw ſhould infallibly be given
" to his poſterity;"

for that very end He had brought him thither out of Chaldea; and further, to encourage *Abraham*, GOD now revealed to him the outlines of all the principal events which ſhould befall his family for the ſpace of four hundred years; after which period, his poſterity having long ſojourned and been in bondage in a ſtrange land, GOD would, at that time,

puniſh their Oppreſſors, and give to them the land he now inhabited, from the boundaries of the Nile, which ran through Egypt, to the river, the great river Euphrates, which divided Canaan from Syria; but he himſelf, in a good old age, ſhould firſt be gathered in peace to his fathers, and peace and plenty ſmile throughout all his habitations.

Lot, a Nephew of *Abraham's*, from the firſt agreed to accompany his Uncle, and had ſet out with him from Haran: they had now long lived together, and the flocks and herds of both had ſo greatly increaſed, that, for the convenience of paſturage, the Uncle and the Nephew had conſented to part. At this time, from the mixture of the two families ſome differences and diſputes had aroſe which tended to haſten the ſeparation. *Abraham* ſaid, "I pray thee, let there "be no ſtrife between thee and me, and thy "herdſmen and mine," aſſigning the tendereſt reaſon, "for we are brethren"——And *Abraham* offered Lot the choice of place, "If thou wilt take the left hand I will take the right——be it Nephew as thou wilt, and GOD bleſs thee whitherſoever thou goeſt."

ABRA-

ABRAHAM now removed his tents, and his flocks and his houſehold; leaving Bethel, he went and dwelt in the land of Moreh, near Hebron, at that time the capital city of Judæa.

ABRAHAM here built an altar to the Lord; and being rich and powerful, he commenced a friendſhip with the chiefs and moſt oppulent in his neighbourhood, and by ſuch wiſe and reſpectable alliances he continued peaceably to live amongſt them ten years.

It was while he reſided near Hebron, that Melchiſedec, a royal prieſt, ſurnamed the Juſt King, came to his tent and bleſſed him, and *Abraham* preſented him with the tenth part of the ſpoils he had lately taken from Chedor-laomer, a neighbouring prince, who had moleſted and ſeized upon the property of his Nephew Lot and impriſoned his perſon——*Abraham*, with his own ſervants, and the numerous ſervants of his friends, aſſembled in a body, and formed a little army of three hundred, and they ſet out in a party, reſcued Lot with his cattle and all his treaſures, and what they had taken from him. This is the very firſt account we read of reſpecting Tythes.

ABRAHAM removed after this to the fruitful vale of Mamre, and under a famous Oak, ever after held in high veneration, the Patriarch pitched his tent, and continued in this valley, about fifteen miles from Hebron.

GOD was pleaſed once more to appear to *Abraham* in this his new habitation; and, in a viſion, He confirmed anew the promiſes he had made him, aſſuring Abraham,

"He would be his exceeding great reward."

As he was ſtill childleſs, Abraham preſumed to name his doubts, and ventured to expoſtulate with GOD; he could not comprehend how the promiſes reſpecting his poſterity could be fulfilled, and it was now told him he ſhould have a ſon and heir. And GOD ſaid,

"Lift now up thine eyes to heaven, behold I "will make thy poſterity more numerous than the "ſtars thereof."

ABRAHAM could not forbear aſking a token whereby he might be aſſured of ſo diſtinguiſhed a bleſſing; and GOD ordered him to pick out from

from his flocks, an heifer, a goat, and a ram, all of them were to be of three years old, and alſo a pigeon and a turtle dove, to prepare them all for ſacrifice, and lay them on the altar.

ABRAHAM obeyed, he killed the beaſts and the birds, divided them in pieces, he firſt placed the beaſts, and over them the birds, and ſet them in ſeparate heaps, and while he ſtood watching them, and keeping off the flies (in that warm country), juſt at ſun-ſet, a deep ſleep fell upon him, and a horror, and intenſe darkneſs accompanied it—GOD again revealed the principal events about to happen; after which Abraham awoke and ſaw a ſmoking furnace, and a bright burning lamp paſſing between the victims and conſuming them—highly delighted at this token of the preſence of his GOD. Abraham ran immediately to his beloved wife, imparting this glorious new ratification and covenant GOD had thus graciouſly made him.

ABRAHAM having arrived to the age of ninety-nine, GOD commanded him now to change his name from Abram to Abraham, the latter ſignifying the Father of many nations; and GOD aſſured him, Kings ſhould come out of his loins, his

his poſterity ſhould be lords and owners of the land in which he was only a pilgrim and a ſtranger, his Repreſentatives ſhould poſſeſs the whole.

God now appointed the ceremony of circumciſion, and commanded Abraham to circumciſe all the males of his family, and henceforward God inſtituted that ordinance to be performed on every male child the eighth day after the birth.

Abraham's happineſs is now completed, he is now expreſsly informed, *Sarah*, his beloved wife, ſhould bring him the heir of all his future bleſſings, and Abraham was directed to call his name Iſaac.

" Within the following year *Sarah* ſhould bear " him Iſaac, and in his ſeed all the nations of the " whole earth ſhould be bleſſed.——

Overpowered by the glorious tidings, Abraham lay proſtrate on the ground, devoutly worſhipping and gratefully praiſing God.

As ſoon as he aroſe he ſet about performing this laſt and new injunction; and Abraham circumciſed himſelf,

himſelf, his ſon Iſhmael, and all the males in his family.

ABRAHAM ſtill dwelt in the vale of Mamre, and as he was ſitting one day at the door of his tent, under the venerable oak, he ſaw afar off three men whom he took to be ſtrangers. Abraham inſtantly aroſe and walked forwards to meet them, bowing low he reſpectfully ſaluted them, and invited them in. One of the three was eminently conſpicuous from the other two, and Abraham addreſſed him as chief,

"My Lord, (ſays he) paſs not, I pray you, "away from thy ſervant—let a little water be "brought to waſh your feet, and reſt under the "tree—I will fetch a morſel of bread, after eat-"ing which ye ſhall paſs on—and they conde-"ſcendingly ſaid, ſo do."

ABRAHAM immediately ordered on the table the beſt proviſions of his houſe, he killed the fateſt calf, the higheſt delicacy of the country, and courteouſly and moſt hoſpitably entertained his gueſts.

'Twas while they ſat at dinner one of the three ſpake of the honours about to be conferred

on

on Sarah, "within a year Sarah ſhould be a joyful mother, and bear him a ſon. With a diſcourſe ſo intereſting Sarah's curioſity was very naturally excited, and ſhe ſtood liſtening at the door of the tent; her feelings were ſo overpowered by what ſhe had heard, it was impoſſible to command herſelf, ſhe fell into a loud laugh, and the gueſts left the table and ran to enquire what could be the cauſe. Confuſed, and quite aſhamed, Sarah uſed every means to ſtifle it, ſhe would fain have excuſed it, fain would deny it, all was totally out of her power—the ſerious and ſtriking enquiry affrighted her ſtill more—abaſhed at the diſcovery ſhe ſtood expecting a rebuke both from her huſband and his gueſts; a very gentle one indeed was all that now paſſed, one of the three gravely and mildly ſuggeſted to Sarah,

"That nothing was impoſſible with GOD."

In this very hoſpitable reception of his gueſts, how very conſpicuous is the humility of the Patriarch, he offers ſo little, and he gives ſo much.

Of theſe three angels one had been ſent purpoſely to notify the birth of a ſon to Abraham, but

but the other two were commiſſioned to execute the ſad ſentence on two once famous cities in the vale of Siddim.

In the afternoon the gueſts took their leave in order to purſue their journey, and Abraham courteouſly accompanied them, and ſet them on their way—a very uſual civility then. Afterwards, as they paſſed along, one of them confidentially revealed to him a ſecret and very awful judgment. God (he ſaid) had commiſſioned him to go to the populous city of Sodom on a moſt tremendous errand; the cries of Sodom and Gomorrah were gone up to Heaven, and his orders were, utterly to deſtroy both cities, and all their inhabitants, kings and nobles and people.

Abraham ſtood agaſt at what he heard, ſtruck with the deepeſt horror and conſternation, and full of compaſſion and ſympathy.

Abraham, with true piety, and moſt devout earneſtneſs pleaded for Sodom, and never ceaſed his entreaties till he had gained a promiſe,

" That in caſe there ſhould be found ten righ-
" teous men in Sodom, God would for their
" ſakes ſpare the city."

There is a winning modeſty and reverential awe in his very pathetic and moſt eloquent pleadings with God; and the forbearance and mercy of God are beautifully illuſtrated in his condeſcending anſwers.

ABRAHAM had only the ſatisfaction of preſerving his Nephew Lot and his family, to whom the ſecret and viſitation were revealed, and they were all of them firſt led out of the city by the deſtroying Angel himſelf.

The following morning Abraham, from the place where he had ſtood before the Lord, ſaw the black ſmoke and ſulphureous flames aſcending as from a furnace——

"The Lord had rained upon Sodom and "Gomorrah brimſtone and fire."

He overthrew both cities and their numerous inhabitants with a tremendous earthquake, thunderings, lightning, and liquid fire.

ABRAHAM had lived ſixteen years on the plains of Mamre, and was now looking out a new ſituation for himſelf, his herds, and his flocks. The ſtench and fumes ariſing from the vale of Siddim haſtened

haſtened his removal, and he went and dwelt in the land of the Philiſtines, between Kadeſh and Shur, near Gerar.

ABRAHAM, perhaps too fearful and overcautious, thought it neceſſary here again to practiſe that ſame deceit he had before practiſed in the court of Pharaoh:

" And he ſaid of Sarah, ſhe is my ſiſter."

Gerar was a capital city, and Abimelech, that amiable Prince, kept his court there.

Sarah's exquiſite beauty charmed the inhabitants, and captivated the King. Abimelech ſent for Sarah, but before ſhe was introduced to him, he was informed by a viſion that ſhe was Abraham's wife.

Upon this the King ordered her to be reſtored to her huſband, and reproved Abraham's timidity and want of confidence in the honour and virtue of his court. Abraham's reply was a frank confeſſion of the truth; he feared, to obtain Sarah, they would deprive him of his life.

Abimelech, ſatisfied with what he heard, and happy to have eſcaped the ſnare he had been ſo near falling into, ſaid to Abraham,

" Behold, my land is before you, dwell where " it pleaſeth thee."

And he preſented him with ſheep and oxen, men-ſervants and women-ſervants, and a thouſand pieces of ſilver to purchaſe a rich veil, a beautiful covering, for his wife; and addreſſing himſelf to Sarah, he ſaid,

" This I give thee as a part of your dreſs, " ſuited to married life, and fit for your ſtation " and modeſty."

A polite acknowledgement of her enchanted beauty, and ſome compenſation for an injury he once had intended her.

It was here, under ſuch a friendly protection and good ſettlement, Sarah brought forth her long-wiſhed-for ſon, and ſhe called his name Iſaac, which ſignifies laughter; and, on the eighth day (as he had been directed) Abraham circumciſed his ſon.

This ſeemed a truly pleaſing and happy ſeaſon of their lives; Abraham and Sarah in the Zenith of their felicity; Sarah ſuckled her child, and in due time weaned it; on this joyful event, Abraham made a great feaſt, a general thankſgiving, and high conviviality throughout all his houſehold.

Now follows the hiſtory of the moſt awful trial of Faith and Obedience ever exhibited:

A human ſacrifice required, and the fondeſt and moſt affectionate father commanded to ſlay and to offer up his child upon the altar. How the order was conveyed we are not told; God has a vaſt variety of ways of communicating what knowledge he pleaſes.

This was no inſtant offering under the impreſſions of a viſion or threat; time is allowed for reflection; for parental feelings to grow ſtronger; for the tendereſt yearnings of nature; the pleadings of love and innocence. The ſentence itſelf is a beautiful gradual riſe of the paſſions, higher and higher.

" Take now thy ſon, thine only ſon, thy ſon
" Iſaac, whom thou loveſt, and get thee into the
" land

" land of Moriah, and offer him there, for a " burnt offering, upon one of the mountains " which I ſhall tell thee."

A command conſiſting of every thing terrible to a parent; what do we not feel for the innocence of the youth? and what for the conſciouſneſs of the father? Yet Abraham at once reſolves; makes no delay; riſes up, immediately at day-break, with ſerenity and wonderful compoſure; prepares for his journey; ſaddles his aſs; orders two ſervants to attend them; and having called up Iſaac, and cleft the wood, they all ſet out together from Beer-ſheba to Mount Moriah. A little before he came to the foot of the mountain he directed his two ſervants to ſtop, and wait his return.

ABRAHAM and his ſon aſcend the hill; the former carrying the fire and the knife, and Iſaac bearing the wood. Being arrived at the deſtined ſpot, in amiable ſimplicity, Iſaac enquired for the victim—

" Behold, father, the fire and the wood, where " is the lamb?"

ABRA-

ABRAHAM compoſedly told him, God would provide one for himſelf. The mighty ſecret burns in his anxious breaſt, and now comes the time when all muſt be revealed: his beloved ſon, now no child, probably about five and twenty, unconſcious of his ſituation, his conſent became neceſſary, and muſt be obtained; he could flee and eſcape, he could reſiſt; is he likely to ſubmit to torture, to agony, to death?

A moſt affecting diſcovery follows; diſarming the man, overwhelming the parent: it is told, and, on the part of Iſaac, manfully, piouſly, and gracefully received:

"It were enough for me that my earthly pa-
"rent, alone, called me to the altar, how much
"more when my heavenly Father redemands his
"own."

Iſaac ſubmits to be tied, to be bound, to be laid on the pile of wood, the father's hand is uplifted——and the knife.

Intentions are acts; the ſacrifice is offered, the voice of God now burſt forth:

"Lay:

" Lay not thy hand on the lad; I know
" thou feareſt God, ſeeing thou haſt not with-
" held thy ſon, thine only ſon from me."

With what ecſtacy muſt it have been received.

God now condeſcended to renew all his promiſes and covenants with Abraham.

" By myſelf have I ſworn (ſaith the Lord) in
" bleſſing I will bleſs thee, and in multiplying I
" will multiply thy ſeed as the ſtars in the heaven,
" and as the ſand on the ſea-ſhore.

" All the nations of the earth ſhall be bleſſed
" in thy ſeed, becauſe thou haſt obeyed my
" voice."

In a thicket cloſe by him, caught by his horns, Abraham ſaw a ram, which he took and immediately offered up as a burnt-offering.

Father and ſon cordially and moſt affectionately embrace; they deſcend from the mountain; Iſaac lives; Abraham's ſacrifice is accepted, his faith and obedience perfected.

On

On his preparing to return, the fond affectionate mother engages the Patriarch's firſt thoughts; Iſaac, ſhe is tenderly feeling our abſence and foreboding miſchief; haſte, Iſaac, thy mother will think we tarry. They deſcend the hill, rejoin the two ſervants they left in waiting, and all return back to Beer-ſheba.

This very ſpot now choſen by God for the ſcene of this wonderful ſacrifice, was afterwards diſtinguiſhed as the ſeat of empire; for the ſuperbeſt and moſt magnificent temple in the univerſe; and moſt of all by a ſacriſice infinitely more important, and infinitely more valuable.

After this very intereſting and highly animating ſcene, Abraham returned to his rural and domeſtic life, and enjoyed its many innocent and pleaſurable endearments more than ever, till they were all diſtreſsfully interrupted by the death of Sarah, his beloved wife, ſhe had now attained to her one hundred and twenty-ſeventh Year.

The earlier part of her life had been chequered with many mortifications: the long unaccompliſhed wiſh of bearing a ſon; the unſettled hard-

ſhips of a life of pilgrimage; and ſome ſtings and torments from jealouſy, even almoſt to the age of ninety; but ſhe had enjoyed, during the laſt thirty-ſeven years, a delightful calm, cheared and cheriſhed by the unabated affection of Abraham, and the amiable and diſtinguiſhed accompliſhments and piety of her ſon, the joy of his parents and the favourite of his God.

A companion ſo fair, amiable, and lovely, Abraham bewailed and moſt tenderly loved; a friendſhip of very long ſtanding, and cemented at laſt by the deareſt of all pledges. He very feelingly laments his loſs.

ABRAHAM was ſtill a pilgrim, wandering without any ſettled habitation, tender, affectionate, and ſorrowful, at the age of one hundred and thirty ſeven; he is conſidering how he ſhall honour her remains, procure it a reſidence of ſafety, and make it his own.

It was in thoſe days thought ignominious for any perſon to bury in a ſepulchre belonging to another. Abraham therefore went to the gate of Hebron, the high Court of Judicature, where the elders, magiſtrates, and nobles met to adminiſter juſtice,

juſtice, ſettle property and the publick buſineſs of the ſtate.

He there introduced himſelf, and being permitted to ſpeak, he made them an offer for a piece of land, a purchaſe of a field for a burial place, and he addreſſed himſelf to the ſons of Heth, the moſt conſiderable family at Hebron.

On Abraham's propoſal, all the elders and judges ſtood up, and they freely offered him a choice of every ſepulchre throughout the country.

Every elder made an offer of his own, what they themſelves had built for their own uſe and their families.

" Hear us, my Lord, thou art a mighty " prince, in the choice of our ſepulchres bury " thy dead, there is none of us all ſhall with- " hold from thee his ſepulchre."

In ſuch high veneration was the character and reſpectability of the Patriarch.

ABRAHAM felt all their kindneſs, he grateful thanked them, but begged that he might be per-

mitted to buy the cave of Mac-pelah from Ephron the Hittite.

Ephron came forwards and made him a free offer of the field and the cave.

" My Lord, the field give I thee, and the cave " that is therein I give it thee."

ABRAHAM perſiſted in buying it, and paying down the utmoſt value, and on Ephron's naming four hundred ſhekels of ſilver, about ſixty pounds, Abraham cut it him off, and paid it down in court in full weight.

This is probably the very firſt conveyance ever made, and indeed the firſt money tranſaction we read of.

ABRAHAM took his leave of the court, brought with him his title-deed, took poſſeſſion of the field, the timber upon it, and the cave; and he here depoſited the dear remains of his beloved wife.

This was Abraham's firſt landed eſtate in Canaan, it commenced in a ſingle field, and a cave for a burying-place.

Penſive

Penſive and mournful Abraham returned home, and employed his firſt thoughts how he ſhould happily ſettle his ſon.

Iſaac had arrived to the age of forty, and his father's conſciencious wiſh was, that he ſhould take a wife from among his own kindred. Abraham now, therefore, held a conference with his ſon, and propoſed to him a marriage with Rebekah, one of his nieces, a daughter of Milcah, the widow of his brother Nahor.

His ſon Iſaac, affectionate and dutiful, was always fond of retirement, buſily employed in domeſtic life, readily gave up the ſettlement of his affairs to his father, and even left him to form this very intereſting and important connexion for life.

Both father and ſon placed the higheſt confidence in the fidelity of an ancient and very truſty ſervant.

Abraham laid his plans, and determined to ſend to Haran in Meſopotamia, where many of his family yet lived. He conſulted with this old and faithful ſervant, and bound him, by an oath,

to

to bring him a wife for his ſon Iſaac out of his own family and kindred.

The ſervant laid his hand under Abraham's thigh (the ancient cuſtom of taking an oath) and called God to witneſs the engagement he had thus ſolemnly made.

ABRAHAM inveſted him with full powers and authority even to conclude the marriage; and he diſpatched him with a princely and honourable train of ten camels, laden with the richeſt preſents, a dowry for the damſel.

ABRAHAM's faithful ſervant made the beſt of his way to Haran, and before he entered the city, he ſaw the young women (as was uſual in thoſe days) coming out to draw water at the well, and Rebekah was one.

The hiſtory of this meeting is told with wonderful ſimplicity, and a happy coincidence of events.

Rebekah was pointed out to the ſervant; ſhe was ſeen with her pitcher; the damſel was wondrous fair, in youthful bloom, and highly pleaſing. He watched her as ſhe went down to the well,

and

and while ſhe filled her pitcher, ſtruck with her elegant perſon, and overjoyed at hearing who ſhe was, Abraham's faithful ſervant ran to meet her, and he ſaid,

" Let me, I pray you, drink a little water out " of your pitcher."

Intent on his errand, he was trying her temper and hoſpitality; a ſtranger and a traveller, he pleads being weary and thirſty; refreſh me with a draught from your pitcher.

Rebekah courteouſly ſays,

" Drink, my Lord."

As ſoon as he returned the pitcher, ſhe haſtily ſet it down; ſaying,

" And now alſo will I draw water for thy ca- " mels till they have all done drinking."

Thus witneſſing the ſweetneſs of her diſpoſition and the friendlineſs of her heart, he ventured to enquire after her family,

" Whoſe fair daughter art thou?"

She told him,

" She was daughter of Bethuel, the ſon of " Milcah."

" Pray, have you room in your family to lodge " me, and can I fodder my beaſts ?"

Perſiſting in her good humour, ſhe told him ;

" She had ſtraw and provender enough for them " all."

The ſervant, delighted, locked on a gold earing, and put bracelets round her wriſts ; and on this ſhe ran away home to tell of the ſtranger, and name his requeſt.

It was ſoon reported from whom he was come, and the train he had brought. Her brother Laban (at whoſe houſe ſhe lived) ran out to meet him, to enquire after his rich relations, and his meſſage.

With hearty cordiality Laban invited him in, ordered a table to he ſpread, good cheer and refreſhment for the traveller.

Abraham's

Abraham's faithful ſervant improved this moment of Laban's benevolence, and refuſed even to enter his houſe till he had named his errand; told of all the rich treaſures of his maſter; the amiable accompliſhments and very elegant perſon of Iſaac; and unloaded the rich preſents he had brought.

The brother could only reflect upon it as a bleſſing intended them by God; and aſked, how he could refuſe, ſeeing the matter was already determined by him.

But Laban's ſuggeſting—brothers have no authority over the affections of the maid—on this ambigituy (though he ſeem'd only to have reſpect to his not hurrying her away) Abraham's ſervant inſtantly turned round to the virgin, and he preſented her with earings and bracelets, and jewels of gold and Jewels of ſilver, and then made a rich preſent to her mother, and Laban.

After which, leaving the damſel to admire her ornaments, and the family and her to diſcourſe upon them and his meſſage, he ſat down to his meal, and left them together.

Some little time after, he reſumed his requeſt, named his return, and preſſed her accompanying him.

Her mother and Laban pleaded much for her ſtay; let the damſel abide a little longer, ten days at the leaſt, and ſhould ſhe ſhow no reluctance, then ſhall ſhe go with thee to thy maſter and his ſon.

The truſty ſervant (well aware of human ficklenefs) would not ceaſe his importunity and leave it undecided, he kept urging a compliance. This could not be done without the damſel, her conſent became neceſſary, and calling her in, they put the queſtion to be anſwered by her:

"And Rebekah ſaid, I will go."

In conſequence of which, attended by her nurſe, ſhe ſet off the next morning on her journey.

All the reſt of the day was ſpent in high feſtivity and joy; the neighbours around came with careſſes and congratulations; and amidſt the affectionate embraces of her friends and relatives, and the tears and the joys of them all, Rebekah, with

with her nurſe and the ſervant, ſet out on their camels from Haran.

Iſaac, not indifferent to ſo intereſting an event, thoughtful and expecting them home, went out in a ſerious mood, and was walking up and down in the fields, thinking of all that was paſſing and much of his bride, ſpying the camels a coming, all in a flutter from impatience, he felt overcome by his thoughts and the nearneſs of the interview.

Rebekah was told who he was; ſhe alight from her camel; with unaffected modeſty (truly feminine) ſhe covered herſelf over with a Veil, and ſtood ſtill to receive his firſt ſalutations and compliments.

Iſaac gracefully led her to the Tent that had always been his mother's, highly pleaſed with her beauty, her elegant perſon and her modeſty.

Abraham rejoiced on thus ſeeing his ſon now made ſo happy, and in poſſeſſion of ſo charming, ſo agreeable a wife.

The Patriarch was now arrived to the age of one hundred and forty-one. The hiſtory informs us: Abraham ſtill reſpectfully dwelling on the

happineſs of wedded life, married Keturah, and by her Abraham had ſix ſons.

He took the greateſt care to portion out theſe children, ſo that they could not interfere with the inheritance of his ſon Iſaac, and interrupt the quiet and peace of him and his family. He placed them in Arabia, Eaſtward of Beer-ſheba and the land of Canaan, and Abraham had now alſo ten grand-children.

If you contraſt Abraham with his ſon, the Father was diſtinguiſhed by Firmneſs of mind, and Iſaac by tenderneſs of heart, fitting him for more domeſtic Scenes. Abraham extorts from us Admiration, Iſaac inſinuates himſelf into our love: Splendid virtues require ſuperior abilities; but the milder graces of Iſaac, as they need only a well-diſpoſed heart, ſo they may be diſplayed at the family hearth. Setting aſide ambition, the life of Iſaac is a life of dignity and honour.

ABRAHAM, the good old man, content and calm under a review of the paſt; a conſcience finding nothing to reproach him; his truſt in God unabated; Abraham's laſt hour was peace, and Iſaac ſtood fondly weeping over him.

Thus

Thus this Venerable Illuſtrious Patriarch, Heir of a world, and the Friend of God, at the age of one hundred and ſeventy-five was gathered to his Fathers, and to her, with whom, when living, he had been ſo happily united.

A man of exemplary piety, and highly exalted virtues.

His ſons, Iſaac and Iſhmael, with the moſt reſpectful ſolemnity, paid him the laſt dutiful and filial honours, and buried him in the cave of Mac-pelah, on the ſide of Sarah his beloved wife.

Uncommon were his trials, great and extraordinary were his bleſſings.

A life of diſtinguiſhed Firmneſs, many excellent virtues, with the profoundeſt reverence for his God.

Againſt Hope, he believed in Hope, ſtrong in Faith, fully ſatisfied what God had promiſed, He was alſo able to perform.

Unbounded

Unbounded was his confidence and reliance on Him, and it was rewarded with preſent bleſſings; ſignal promiſes; the moſt winning condeſcenſion; and the higheſt national Honours to his Poſterity.

ESSAY III.

A Short Introductory Compendium to the JEWISH HISTORY.

ADAM, introduced into a beautiful garden, rich and luxuriant, is directed to dreſs and preſerve its cultivation and neatneſs.

He was to eat of its fruits, and drink of its pure ſprings, with one ſingle prohibition, obviouſly expreſſive of his obedience and gratitude.

GOD reveals to Adam what relates to the creation, and to his own formation in particular.

Adam

Adam delivers it down to SETH, and Seth to ENOCH, Enoch to METHUSALAH his ſon, and ſo to NOAH; and as Shem lived in Chaldea, he communicated it to ABRAHAM the Father and the Founder of the Jewiſh Nation.

The Longevity of man, in theſe early ages, contributed to render tradition the criterion of truth.

Although 2432 years had elapſed before the birth of Moſes, our inſpired hiſtorian, the channels of information were as yet incorrupted. The Hiſtory was very probably conveyed down from Adam to Moſes by only ſeven perſons *.

METHUSALAH, the grand-father of Noah, was 340 years old when Adam died, and he afterwards lived till the year of the Flood, when NOAH had attained to his ſix huudredth year, and died only two years before the birth of Abraham. SHEM, being his neighbour, was very likely to communicate what he knew to ABRAHAM. ISAAC inſtructed his grand-ſon JOSEPH in the Hiſtory of his predeceſſors; and AMRAM, the father of Moſes, was Contemporary with Joſeph.

* Methuſalah, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Iſaac, Joſeph, and Amram.

Theſe

Theſe were the conveyances by which the Hiſtory is preſerved and handed down to us ſo faithfully in our Bibles.

On the firſt day of his Sovereignty and Dominion, Adam commanded all the Beaſts and flying fowl, and every reptile to pay him homage, and as they paſſed before him, he gave to each its proper name, diſtinctly to characterize them to his poſterity.

We have next related the formation of Eve, her marriage and introduction to Adam.

Beſides the magnificent volume of Creation open to his view, Man had very ſignal intimations and aſſiſtances afforded him.

God delighted in Adam, and converſed with him as a Father and a Friend.

The leſſons He taught him were, Gratitude, Love, Veneration, Awe, and Reverence. The homage of the heart, in ſimplicity and purity, in ſpirit and in truth.

Inveſted with Sovereignty, and in poſſeſſion of a world, various Offices and Duties are allotted him.

A law from within regulates his life, and viſibly and powerfully checks him when he breaks it.

Six days are allowed him for employments, pleaſures and recreation; the ſeventh is ſacred, the Sabbath of his God.

Such the happy diſpenſation of innocence; but how ſoon it ended! What a ſad exchange enſued from diſobedience? Unruly paſſions ſtrange and new, mutual upbraidings, tumult, ſhame, dread, remorſe.

Knowing now that they were naked, *Guilt* ſought a covering for itſelf and them, abaſh'd, debaſed, their own tormentors, they ſtood awaiting (amidſt the thickeſt foliage) the preſence and the anger of God, the ſentence of death, and expulſion from paradiſe.

The ſecond is a Diſpenſation of Grace, and it reached to the time of the Flood, and may be called the firſt tidings of the Goſpel.

The ſeed of the woman ſhould deſtroy the works of the Devil. The gracious plan of God for

for the Salvation of mankind by ſome mighty Saviour.

The third is the Noarchical, from Noah, the Preacher of righteouſneſs, and is a repetition of this diſpenſation of Grace now made to Noah, the ſecond Father of mankind.

Even in this very early period there were many bright diſcoveries reſpecting God, his providence, and a world to come, as the life and ſufferings of Job, who lived under that diſpenſation, expreſsly inform us.

It was in the ſix hundredth year of Noah's life God extirpated the human race by a flood, Noah and his family excepted, he lived three hundred and fifty years after, in all nine hundred and fifty.

Towards the end of the ſecond generation after this event, notwithſtanding an interpoſition ſo extraordinary, the knowledge and worſhip of God became again obſcured and corrupted by the groſſeſt ſuperſtition and Idolatry; and it pleaſed God, from among the nations, to chuſe out the family of Abraham, a grand-ſon of his ſervant Noah, to be the Father and the Founder of the Jewiſh Empire, and commanded him to leave his

native home, and father's houſe at Haran in Meſopotamia, and travel into Canaan, a land overrun with Idolatry and iniquity, that he and his houſe might be a ſtanding monument to God, to preſerve religion and virtue, in oppoſition to the degeneracies of the nations around him.

God there revealed to Abraham his intentions reſpecting him and his poſterity, for the ſpace of four hundred years, at the end of which period they ſhould quietly poſſeſs all the land of Canaan, even from the Nile to the great River, the River Euphrates.

A government thus commencing deſcended to his ſon Iſaac, and to Jacob, and to his twelve Sons.

Theſe formed a numerous people called Iſraelites, from Iſrael, the new name given to Jacob, and on this account.

An angel appeared one evening to Jacob at Mehanaim, and is ſaid to have wreſtled with him till the morning (a kind of ſpiritual wreſtling) when Jacob with tears, intreaties, and ſupplications, prevailed upon the angel to bleſs him, upon which he

he changed his name to Iſrael, which ſignifies a man that has prevailed with God.

Jacob's hiſtory informs us he was the younger brother, and by a ſtratagem of his Mother's, obtained the bleſſing intended for Eſau the elder.

Rebekah loved her ſon Jacob the beſt, and partially indulgent, ſhe put him in a way of deceiving his Father, and robbing his brother Eſau of his birth-right.

So injudicious a fondneſs laid the foundation of much miſchief, and was a weakneſs and blemiſh in the character of Rebekah; for Eſau, as was very natural, after being defrauded, hated Jacob, and he once intimated, that after the days of mourning for his father were over, he would ſlay his brother.

Rebekah, fearing Eſau's fury and reſentment, and to prevent his deſigns on Jacob, adviſed her favourite ſon to abſent himſelf, he did ſo, and lived at a great diſtance many years.

In the hopeful gaiety of early life this had led Jacob to form high expectations of happineſs—

Jacob

native home, and father's houſe at Haran in Meſopotamia, and travel into Canaan, a land overrun with Idolatry and iniquity, that he and his houſe might be a ſtanding monument to God, to preſerve religion and virtue, in oppoſition to the degeneracies of the nations around him.

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Jacob

Jacob was ſorely diſappointed—He had been told by Iſaac his father,

" God would bleſs him with the dew of Hea-
" ven, and the fatneſs of the Earth, with plenty
" of corn and wine—that people were to ſerve
" him, and nations to bow down to him—a Lord
" over his brethren.——"

But the hiſtory informs us, Jacob, in order to preſerve his own life, and avoid his brother's reſentment, was driven forth from his country, and the protection of his father's houſe, neceſſitated to ſeek an eſtabliſhment in the family of Laban; and after a long ſervitude for a woman whom he loved, Leah (another ſiſter) was treacherouſly impoſed upon him, and one whom he could not love—Jacob ſerved ſeven years more for Rachel.

His children afterwards were ſources of more trouble. Reuben was inceſtuous; Judah adulterous; his daughter Dinah diſhonoured; the conduct of Simeon and Levi, two of his ſons, diſtreſſed him; two of his grand-children were ſuddenly ſtruck dead; Rachel, his beloved wife, was taken from him in circumſtances which embittered his ſorrow; his ſon Joſeph torn from him in youthful prime; and he himſelf neceſſi-

touſly

touſly driven in his old age, at one hundred and thirty, to go and ſpend his laſt days in Egypt, among a people who held it an abomination to eat bread with him.

Iſaac and Rebekah had endeavoured to convince Eſau, it was the appointment of God; He had decreed the ſucceſſion before either he or his brother were born; it were in vain (they ſaid) to oppoſe the Providence of God, inſtead of recovering the bleſſing, he would bring down a terrible curſe on his own head.

By ſuch arguments they reconciled Eſau, he ſeemed quite to have conquered his animoſity, and ſome years after, when the two brothers met, a tender, brotherly, and affectionate interview took place, it cloſed by Eſau's kind and very hearty invitation to Mount Seir, the place of his habitation.

It was long after the quarrel, when Jacob, in great Proſperiy, returned back with his wives, and his wealth, and his little ones. As he drew near home, the wrong he had done his brother, and the dread of meeting Eſau, more and more diſtreſſed him; and when Jacob ſaw Eſau advancing

ing to meet him, his heart trembled and he fainted.

After Jacob had recovered himſelf and could proceed on a little farther, Eſau ſaw his brother, he ran forwards to meet him, fell upon his neck, and kiſſed him. Eſau then enquired after his wives and his little ones, and overcome by the affectionate interview, both Brother's wept.

A conſcious feeling of the wrong he had done his brother ſtill diſtreſſes Jacob, but Eſau's generous deportment is wonderful, upon Jacob's making an offering a preſent as it were of reparation,

"What meaneſt thou (ſays Eſau) by all this "drove?"

Jacob replies,

"To gain me favour in the ſight of my Lord."

Eſau with dignity refuſed.

"Brother, I have enough, keep all that thou "haſt for thyſelf."

Jacob

Jacob ſeemed quite diſappointed; earneſtly ſolicitous his brother ſhould accept his preſent, he ſays,

" I pray thee, Brother, receive it; accept a " token of reconciliation; this day ſhould be " highly honoured and diſtinguiſhed; it has re- " ſtored me to the embraces of my Brother, my " tranſport is more than I can expreſs; in thy " preſence I rejoice as in the preſence of a " God."

Eſau now finding his brother's heart in the requeſt, and a further denial unkind, with delicacy and true generoſity yielded to his entreaties, and accepted his preſents.

Jacob did not then proceed to Mount Seir, he built a houſe at Succoth, and afterwards removed to Salem, a city belonging to the Sichemites. Jacob purchaſed a piece of ground, and reſided here with all his family, and his flocks. Here he built an altar, and inſcribed it to the *Mighty God of Iſrael.* Near this place was the celebrated well, ever after called Jacob's Well, ſtill more famous by our Saviour's here meeting and talking with the woman of Samaria.

Jacob's days of trouble ſeemed now to be over, he lived many years in peace, encreaſing in wealth with all his family, beloved and much reſpected; till, upon ſome quarrel, two of his ſons, Simeon and Levi, treacherouſly maſſacred many of the inhabitants who were their neighbours. Jacob was ſorely diſtreſſed, and ſeverely reprimanded them for their inhumanity. And upon this riot and barbarous behaviour of his ſons, Jacob removed nearer to Mamre, where his father Iſaac ſtill lived.

God was here pleaſed to reveal himſelf to Jacob, and directed him to go and dwell at Bethel. After ſome time Jacob returned back to Mamre, and continued with his blind, decrepid, and very aged parent till he died. Iſaac had arrived to the age of one hundred and eighty. Eſau and Jacob buried their father in the cave of Macpelah, with Abraham and Sarah. Eſau returned to Mount Seir, and Jacob continued to live at Mamre. The characters of the two brothers may be thus contraſted.

Eſau was bold and manly, impetuous in his paſſions, but honeſt, often generous, and on the ſlighteſt conceſſion forgiving. Jacob had more artifice, and he had formerly practiſed it with his

mother,

mother, they had contrived ſeveral ſchemes together againſt Eſau. The virtues and vices of Eſau partook of the violence of his character, the one ſhone without ſtudious diſplay, the other prevailed without reſtraint. Jacob's virtues were more mild and regular; Eſau's the ſpontaneous growth of his heart, thoſe of Jacob were produced by reflection. The vices of Eſau were tranſient, thoſe of Jacob made a deeper and more laſting impreſſion.

It was not long after Iſaac's death, and Jacobs return to Mamre, that his very beautiful and beloved ſon Joſeph, ſeventeen years old, was ſold by his brethren to a company of Iſhmaelitiſh merchants, who were travelling with a cargo of ſpices into Egypt. As Jacob's other ſons retnrned home, they killed a kid, and having purpoſely kept Joſeph's upper garment, they dipt it in the blood, and treacherouſly impoſed on the diſtracted father, by telling him a wild beaſt had devoured their brother.

Joſeph, carried into Egypt, was ſold to an Officer of the King's guard, named Potiphar; his diligence, induſtry, and truſtineſs, gained him the good-will and reſpect of his Maſter, and promotion in his family. He ſerved him ten years,

and then, for his virtuous abhorrence of a baſe intrigue, this amiable innocent youth was, on his miſtreſs's accuſation, caſt into the king's priſon. His wiſe modeſt behaviour, and winning manners gained him the favour and notice of the keeper, he employed Joſeph as his deputy, and ſoon intruſted all the priſoners to his care.

Two of ſome diſtinction, who had both held profitable places at Court, the one chief butler, and the other the king's baker, had very extraordinary dreams; Joſeph interpreted them, and preciſely told the time they would be fulfilled. The butler, as Joſeph foretold, was in three day's time reſtored to his place, and the baker was hanged. Joſeph made a friend of the butler, confidentially told him his whole ſtory, and beſought his intereſt to get him out of priſon. But his fellow-priſoner and his good offices were all forgot till two years after, when Pharoah's two famous dreams obliged him to call him to mind, and he then recommended Joſeph as a very wiſe and knowing interpreter. On this occaſion Joſeph was immediately ſent for to the Palace. Pharoah related to him what he had dreamt, and offered a large reward to whomſoever ſhould interpret his dreams.

Seven

Seven fat cows, feeding on the banks of the Nile, devoured by ſeven lean ones.

Seven full ears of corn devoured by ſeven blaſted ones.

Joſeph told the king both dreams repreſented one and the ſame event.

The ſeven fat cows and the ſeven full ears ſignified ſeven years of exceſſive plenty. The ſeven lean cows, and blaſted ears, ſeven years of ſcarcity and famine which would ſucceed them.

Joſeph ſubmiſſively and moſt reſpectfully adviſed his Majeſty to employ a truſty and expert man as Overſeer to build granaries, and ſend officers into every province, and lay up one-fifth part of the corn grown during the ſeven years of plenty, againſt the following years of famine.

Pharoah, his nobles, and all his court, were aſtoniſhed at the wiſdom and modeſty of the young ſtranger, and concluded no one could be ſo fit to be ſet over the kindgdom as Joſeph, and he ſaid no Overſeer was likely ſo faithfully to execute the wiſe propoſals he had made as himſelf. Pharoah appointed Joſeph maſter over all his houſehold; he took his ring from off his finger,

and

and preſented it to Joſeph; he ordered him a dreſs of fine linen; and a chain of gold to be hung about his neck.

Pharoah then iſſued out orders, proclaiming him ſuperintendant over his whole kingdom, inferior in authority only to himſelf. The king gave him in marriage the daughter of the prince of Heliopolis. Pharoah (in Eaſtern pomp) placed Joſeph in a ſplendid carriage, with livery ſervants running before him; the King commanded all his ſubjects to bow the knee to Joſeph.

Thus happily ended thirteen years of virtuous ſufferings, and they were rewarded with no leſs than eighty years of the higheſt ſublunary bliſs.

Eſtabliſhed in his new government, thus highly honoured, and in the full exerciſe of his authority, Joſeph took a Circuit over the whole kingdom; he built granaries, and appointed ſtewards and officers, immenſe loads were brought in and ſafely depoſited; his granaries were all full, and above all meaſure, before the ſeven years of plenty were over. As Joſeph had foretold the years of ſcarcity and famine began, it was felt all over the land of Canaan, and the diſtreſs extended to all the nations round about it. From all quarters applications

plications were made to Pharoah, and the king referred them all to Joſeph.

Jacob ſoon learnt there was corn in Egypt, and his family being in great want, he ſent ten of his ſons down thither to buy ſome. On their arrival in Egypt, the travellers were directed to the Governor's houſe, to obtain an order and permiſſion to buy. Joſeph knew his brethren. He choſe to conceal hiimſelf, but he could not altogether reſiſt his feelings, he inſtantly enquired (though obſcurely) after his father and the family. He then forwarded them with orders for a large ſupply, and ſent them back, all but one, loaded with full ſacks, as his family were in want, directing them, when they returned for more, to bring the younger brother they had told him of along with them. Jacob rejoiced to receive ſo liberal a ſupply, but being told all their adventures, and the Governor's requeſt reſpecting his beloved boy, he wept ſorely.

The ſcarcity and their wants were very great, a ſupply ſoon became neceſſary, his ſons name to him their promiſe to the Governor, they refuſe to go without Benjamin, and they now told him his commands were abſolute and peremptory reſpecting him. The aged parent moſt ſorrowfully aſ-

ſented,

ſented, and they all ſet out on a ſecond embaſſy to Egypt.

On their arrival they were directed to the Governor's houſe, and ordered all to wait there. A moſt feeling and intereſting ſtory—a parley and diſcovery—the tendereſt and moſt affecting interview, ending in a burſt of ſurprize and joy, and an invitation to his father, brothers, and all their families to come into Egypt, for (ſays Joſeph)

"There are yet five Years more in the which "there ſhall be neither earing nor harveſt."

The land of Goſhen, ſituated on the borders of Canaan, not far from Hierapolis, Joſeph's ſeat and principal Reſidence, a moſt fruitful and beautiful ſpot, between the Nile and the borders of the Red Sea, was appointed by Pharoah for them and for their cattle. The King ſent them waggons, proviſions, and carriages, and ten aſſes laden with the choiceſt commodities, to feaſt and accommodate all the family.

As ſoon as the old man, his children, and his grand-children, their wives, and theit little ones, came near the borders of Egypt, Joſeph ſet out

in

in his chariot, with the higheſt joy, to meet his Father, a meeting to be felt, but not to be deſcribed, exquiſite were the feelings of Jacob, although now a hundred and thirty, and tender and affectionate his ſons.

" Joſeph fell on his neck and wept."

Soon as he dried his tears, and this tender greeting was over, Joſeph drove to the Palace, and carried the News himſelf to Pharoah. The King deſires he may ſee and congratulate the old man; Jacob is uſhered into the palace, and he pays his homage; Pharoah ſimply enquired his age, and Jacob anſwers:

" The days of the years of my pilgrimage are
" one hundred and thirty; few and evil have the
" days of the years of my life been."

an anſwer beyond the Monarch's enquiry, but it ſhewed a heart bleeding afreſh at the recollection of its ſorrows.

Joſeph now accompanied his father to the land of Goſhen, and ſettles him and all his family, after this tender and moſt affectionate reception, and very ſincere and hearty welcome.

The Hebrews, though they were at firſt thus hoſpitably invited as gueſts, and graciouſly received, were afterwards ſorely oppreſſed, in captivity and bondage, under a ſucceeding Pharoah *, one hundred and twenty-nine years.

" There aroſe a new King over Egypt, who knew " not Joſeph."

[2432.] Moſes was their deliverer four hundred and thirty years after Abraham came into Canaan, and two hundred and fifteen years from Jacob's deſcent into Egypt. Moſes was called of God, and by him appointed Head, Leader, and Chief over Iſrael. He led them out of Egypt by the way of the Red Sea. Six hundred thouſand men, beſides women and children, the Lord conducting them under the direction of a viſible cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, and they carried the bones of Joſeph along with them.

At the ſea-coaſt, Pharoah and a numerous army came in ſight of them, upon which Moſes waved his wand over the waters, and they inſtantly divided into a heap, to the right hand and to the left, by which means the Iſraelites walked through, on dry land, to the wilderneſs of Etham.

* A Name given to all their Kings.

Pharoah

Pharoah and his hoſt drove furiouſly after them, and they were, at the dawning of the day, every one of them drowned, the dead carcaſes ſwam in great numbers on the ſea, and they covered the ſhore.

About three months after the Iſraelites had left Egypt, they arrived at the foot of Mount Sinai, the higheſt and moſt inacceſſible Mountain in the Eaſt, and it was held ſacred by all the inhabitants round about it.

Here was heard that awful voice of God which ſo terrified the Iſraelites; and God appeared to Moſes in a flame of fire in a buſh, which notwithſtanding was not waſted or conſumed. He was commanded to take off his ſhoes, and aſcend the hill to the top, and Moſes was abſent forty days and forty nights.

Moſes here received the laws, or ten commandments; ceremonial rites and orders reſpecting ſacrifice; ordinances for the adminiſtration of juſtice and deciding controverſies.

The original laws of righteouſneſs, engraven on the heart, were obliterated and much defaced, they are here expreſſed in words, and wrote on

tables of ſtone, by the direction of God, who was pleaſed in this awful and moſt tremendous manner to reſtore to the Jews the grand laws of morality, and by them tranſmit them to all nations. Commands thus authoritatively ſtamped, were perſuaſive exhortations to vigilance, and powerful reſtraints to the torrent of vice and impiety.

Notwithſtanding theſe and other ſtriking miracles and interpoſitions, Iſrael rebelled, and God ſignally puniſhed their diſobedience, for the ſpace of forty years God led by the hand this immenſe multitude all round the deſerts of Arabia, yet all the time mercifully feeding and cloathing them, and Moſes their deliverer employed every day in inſtructing and training them up for the promiſed land; they had much to learn, many vices to conquer, much obſtinacy to ſubdue, and they were thus long under a diſcipline intermixed with the greateſt tenderneſs and ſeverity, and at laſt conducted by Moſes only to the borders of Canaan. He there, at the age of one hundred and twenty, dies on Mount Nebo, Joſhua his general, and the ſeventy Elders, and Eleazar the High Prieſt, accompanied him to the foot of the mountain, they there all took a ſorrowful leave, and Moſes went up to the ſummit alone, and was from thence

thence permitted to take a view of the country. He on this ſpot afterwards died, and was buried in a very private manner in the land of Moab.

A few days before his death, Moſes aſſembled all the tribes of Iſrael, publickly and ſolemnly appointed Joſhua his ſucceſſor, Head, Leader, and Chief over Iſrael.

Joſhua, at the age of ninety-three, enters Canaan. As ſoon as the Prieſts who bore the Ark came to the edge and touched the waters of the River Jordan, a paſſage was opened for them of ſixteen miles in breadth, and the Iſraelites walked through on dry land. God thus ſignalizing their new Commander in like manner as he had honoured Moſes at the Red Sea.

Joſhua boldly marched his army to the plains of Jericho, four miles from the City, and eight from the River Jordan. He afterwards ſubdued the Canaanites, took ſeven famous Cities, and obtained poſſeſſion of a conſiderable part of the land.

Joſhua died at the age of one hundred and ten, and was buried on the hill of Gaaſh, in the tribe of Ephraim.

After the death of Joſhua, each tribe was for ſome time governed by its own Heads and Elders, electing its own General and Commander, but high and eminent characters, Champions, and Deliverers of Iſrael, God, from time to time raiſed up, and they aſſumed the government under the title of

JUDGES; theſe were extraordinary magiſtrates, whoſe office was, to preſide in the ſenate, protect the ſtate, pronounce the law, and regulate divine worſhip.

A regular ſucceſſion of fourteen maintained the dignity two hundred and fifty years; but many years of ſervitude and bondage intervened between ſome of them.

Eight years under Chuſan-Riſhathaim, King of Meſopotamia; Eighteen years in bondage to Moab; Twenty under the Canaanites; Seven under the Medianites; Eighteen under the Amorites; and Forty under bondage to the Philiſtines.

The gallant OTHNIEL, by his good conduct and bravery obtained a rich heireſs, the daughter of Caleb, Joſhua's general, and commander in chief.

Seven

The dignity and title of Judge was firſt conferred upon him, and he governed Iſrael forty years.

EHUD was the ſecond; a brave and reſolute ſoldier, who, while he was paying the yearly tribute to Eglon king of Moab, at the hazard of his own life, murdered him, and reſcued Iſrael from bondage. EHUD maintained the government eighty years.

The third was the valiant SHAMGAR, who ſlew ſix hundred Philiſtines with a Plough-ſhare. He died at the end of the firſt year.

DEBORAH the Propheteſs was the fourth Judge, and *Barak* was her general, ſhe governed Iſrael forty years.

At the apdointment of God, GIDEON ſucceeded to the government as fifth Judge, and the Angel ſent to him on this occaſion, ſaluted him by the honourable title of Saviour of Iſrael. Gideon judged Iſrael forty years.

ABIMELECH, a natural ſon of Gideon, uſurped the dignity, He was cruel, baſe, and ambitious, and put to death all his brethren but one (no leſs than ſixty-nine) at the end of three years he came to an ignominious death himſelf.

TOLAR,

Tolar, of the tribe of Iſſachar, was the next Judge of Iſrael; he retained the government twenty-two years, and was ſucceeded by

Jair, a wealthy man, of the tribe of Manaſſeh, he held in his own right thirty cities, and he had thirty ſons, to each of which he gave a city, two and twenty years he governed Iſrael.

After the death of Jair, the Iſraelites, again in ſervitude and bondage, elected

Jephthah; and he marched againſt the Amonites and overthrew them, but by one raſh vow he ſullied all his glory, and the joy and pleaſure of the triumph, and the ſpoils. Jephthah was Judge of Iſrael ſix years.

Ibsan was their tenth Judge, a native of Bethlehem; he had threeſcore children, thirty ſons and thirty daughters, he lived to ſee them all married, and a very numerous progeny of grandchildren. Ibsan governed Iſrael ſeven years, and was ſucceeded by

Elon, of the tribe of Zebulon, who, after maintaining the dignity ten years, was buried at Aijalon, a city in his own tribe.

Abdon

ABDON Son of Hillel of the tribe of Ephraim, was the twelfth Judge; He ſat eight years. ABDON left forty ſons, and thirty grand-ſons, and they all rode on aſſes' colts, after the manner of the great and wealthy men in Iſrael.

ELI was the firſt who joined the dignity of Judge to that of High Prieſt. Notwithſtanding, under the government of Eli, the people became again idolatrous, and were under ſervitude and bondage to the Philiſtines. ELI, though a good man, was very indolent and remiſs both in the management of his own family, and in his government.

The Iſraelites were more and more oppreſſed, and in the ſeverity of their thraldom they moſt earneſtly beſought the Lord.

God ſent them a Deliverer moſt wonderful from his birth to his death, a Hero of moſt extraordinary ſtrength and valour. He was granted as a Bleſſing to his Parents and the Nation. An Angel had been twice commiſſioned to foretel his Birth, firſt to his Mother, a very old Woman, who had always been reputed barren, and afterwards to Monoah his Father, a native of Zorah, in the tribe of Dan. The Angel left a ſingular but very ſtrict prohibition both reſpecting the

Mother and the Son. She named him SAMPSON, and he is ſaid to have governed Iſrael, together with ELI, twenty years, beſides which, the High Prieſt had maintained both dignities alone, twenty Years more.

SAMUEL was the laſt Judge of Iſrael. On his reſignation, and long before his Death, the reign of the Judges ended, the government was exchanged, and the Kingdom became Monarchical.

SAMUEL was another miraculous Child, granted to the pious and very fervent prayers of his Mother, and by a moſt ſolemn Vow, Hannah dedicated her Child to God, he entered early into the ſervice of the Temple, and was provided for there, at three Years of age. In every little office in his power, he miniſtred to the High Prieſt in his holy functions, girded round with a linen Ephod, and his firſt employment was, to open and ſhut the doors of the tabernacle.

SAMUEL grew up a moſt exemplary, amiable, and highly virtuous character, a Prophet and Judge of Iſrael twenty years, always beloved, reverenced, and applauded. SAMUEL had appointed his two ſons, Joel and Abiah, to aſſiſt him in the adminiſtration of Juſtice at Beer-ſheba, the

extremity

extremity of his Kingdom. The People were diſpleaſed with their conduct, and accuſed them of corruption and bribery.

The Heads and Elders of Iſrael aſſembled and came in a body to Ramah, and demanded of SAMUEL a King, his two Sons, both (they ſaid) were unworthy to be his Succeſſor. SAMUEL long expoſtulated and reaſoned with them, would fain have convinced them of their ingratitude, and upbraided them, explaining moſt wiſely and in the ſtrongeſt terms what they would ſuffer by ſuch an Exchange and Revolution. The Monarchs of the Eaſt were always arbitrary, deſpotic, and tyrannical, SAMUEL ſweetly deſcribed the high exerciſe of their Authority, Lordlineſs, and Ambition:

" He will take your Sons to drive his Chariots,
" and be his Horſemen, and ſome ſhall run before
" him. Captains ſhall preſide over thouſands,
" and Captains over Fifties. Ye ſhall Ear his
" ground, and reap his harveſt, and make his
" ſpears, and build his chariots. Your Daugh-
" ters he will take to be his ſervants, to cook his
" meat, and bake his bread. He will ſeize your
" Fields, and your Vineyards, and your Olive-
" grounds, and give them to his Courtiers.

" Your men-ſervants and your maid-ſervants,
" and your goodlieſt young men, and your aſſes,
" he will put them to his Work."

Nevertheleſs the people refuſed to liſten, one and all crying out,

" Nay, but we will have a King over us."

On this obſtinate and determined reſolution, both of the people and their Elders, SAMUEL, at the appointment of God, anointed Saul, King of Iſrael, a very tall and beautiful youth, one of the Sons of Kiſh, and of the Tribe of Benjamin.

SAUL reigned over Iſrael Forty years, and after a total defeat, and moſt bloody ſlaughter, three of his brave Sons already among the ſlain, himſelf mangled, wounded, and dying, in deep deſpair, he is ſaid to have preferred falling on his own ſword, rather than be carried off by the enemy, ſtreaming with blood, dying, and yet not dead.

This Event opened for DAVID a fair and very natural road to the Crown. Iſhboſheth, a ſurviving ſon of Saul, and David (who had before been anointed by Samuel) were both proclaimed, the former

former by Abner, his Father's General, and David was elected by the tribe of Judah, and crowned at Hebron; the government thus divided continued ſeven years and a half; Iſhboſheth was then murdered by two of his own officers, and they brought his head to Hebron, and preſented it to David. Upon this event all the Tribes aſſembled and came to pay him homage, and they now anointed him again, and by ſound of Trumpet proclaimed him King over all Iſrael.

The Government thus united and eſtabliſhed continued during the Reigns of David and his ſon Solomon, but after Solomon's death, two Tribes only acknowledged Rehoboam his ſon, who was ſtiled King of Judah, and ten Tribes revolted under Jeroboam, a ſpirited and gallant youth, ſome time Governor over the Tribe of Ephraim, and over the Tribe of Manaſſeh. Jeroboam aſſumed the Title of King of Iſrael.

Throughout the Old Teſtament they are ever afterwards thus divided and diſtinguiſhed, and the Hiſtory records the reigns of twenty ſucceſſive Kings of Judah, and nineteen Kings who reigned over Iſrael. Of theſe Hoſhea was the laſt, in the ninth year of his Reign, and 721 years before the Birth of our Saviour, Samaria, the Iſraelitiſh Capital,

Capital, was taken by Shalmaneſer King of Aſſyria; Hoſhea and all his People were made Captive, a total end was hereby put to the Kingdom of Iſrael, after it had ſtood a ſeparate Kingdom from Judah two hundred and fifty-ſix years.

Judah remained a Kingdom one hundred and thirty four years longer, and ended as a Monarchy with the Captivity of the Jews in Babylon; they were in bondage there ſeventy years. The City of Jeruſalem, and the ſuperb and very magnificent Temple, were firſt plundered, then burnt to the ground, and the whole country was laid waſte.

To this Period the Kingdom of Judah had deſcended uninterruptedly in the line of David.

At the end of ſeventy years, and in the firſt year of the Reign of Cyrus, the highly celebrated Hero, founder of the Perſian Monarchy, and Conqueror of Babylon, the Prophet Daniel, ever zealous for his conntry, intereſted himſelf with that Prince, pointed out to him the Prophecies reſpecting the Jews, upon which Cyrus publiſhed an Edict for their releaſe, and gave them leave to return to Jeruſalem, and rebuild their City and Temple,

After the Jews had been ſold as ſlaves, and diſperſed through a vaſt and mighty Empire, fifty thouſand of them only were collected and returned, and theſe were chiefly from among the poorer ſort.

Zerubbabel, a Prince of the blood royal, a Grandſon of Jehoiakim, He firſt led them out, and together with the Heads of ſome few reſpectable families, a Council was formed, and the Jewiſh affairs in Church and State regulated and re-eſtabliſhed.

Under Ezra, a very learned Jew of the Houſe of Aaron, about ſeventy years afterwards, another but much ſmaller body ſet out for Jeruſalem. Ezra received his Commiſſion from Perſia, by orders from Artaxerxes Longimanus, and he governed them as Viceroy thirteen years. Ezra was then ſucceeded by NEHEMIAH, * a patriotic, amiable, and good man, who was at that time ſent from Shuſhan with new Powers and authority. Nehemiah was the laſt they commiſſioned. The Government was afterwards maintained by the High Prieſt then in office, till the Perſian Empire was deſtroyed by Alexander the Great. The

* Year of the World 3582, and 422 before CHRIST.

Jews

Jews had enjoyed till that Period peace, ſecurity, and protection, in common with the ſubjects of the Perſian Empire.

After the Death of that highly celebrated Conqueror, his Kingdoms and Empire were divided among his general Officers. Sad and cruel were the ſcenes of bloodſhed and impiety which followed. The Jews ſuffered the moſt horrid barbarities and perſecutions. For ſome years all worſhip to the God of Iſrael ceaſed. The Jewiſh Ceremonies and Sacrifice were ſuppreſſed in Jeruſalem. The Temple polluted with blood, and the filthieſt abominations, and the Statue of Jupiter was ſet up on the Altar of burnt-offerings for publick homage and adoration.

MATTATHIAS, a Prieſt zealous for the Law of God, and his worſhip, was among the firſt who oppoſed the progreſs of this bloody and murderous Apoſtacy, and after him Judas Maccabeus his Son, and a race of Heroes of his family, with an intrepidity and zeal almoſt incredible reſcued them, entered the cities, deſtroyed the Syrian Guard, pulled down the Images and heathen Altars, opened the Synagogues, and at length the Temple, and re-eſtabliſhed the Jewiſh worſhip, and the Solemnities of Sacrifice. Many

and

and glorious were the Victories they from time to time had gained, and the Honours, Privileges, and Proſperity they had procured for their Countrymen, but a tranquility thus enjoyed under the Maccabees (called the Aſmodean family) was at laſt diſturbed by Ariſtobulus, a deſcendant of Mattathias, and younger brother of Hyrcan. Both Brothers made their appeal to Pompey, the Roman Emperor, and Hyrcan was re-eſtabliſhed. On the obſtinacy of the Jews, their impiety and ingratitude, God was pleaſed to give them up into the hands of the Romans, who now, for the firſt time, made them tributary on Hyrcans reſtoration and eſtabliſhment.

The Aſmodean Race did not long ſurvive the diſgrace of their Country. Herod, an Idumean by birth, obtained by his Intereſts at Rome, the Kingdom of Judæa. He reigned thirty-ſeven Years. At the death of Herod, the Kingdom was divided into four Parts, each was called a Tetrarchy, and governed by a Prince who afterwards bore the title of Tetrarch.

While the Jews were under bondage and Subjection to Rome, Pontius Pilate being Governor, OUR SAVIOUR was born and lived amongſt them, publickly taught in their Synagogues and Tem-

ple, daily performed many wonderful Miracles, cauſing the lame to walk, the blind to ſee, the deaf to hear, and even the dead were raiſed to life in proof and confirmation of his doctrine. By fulfiling all the Prophecies reſpecting himſelf, he afforded his Countrymen moſt ample and undeniable evidence of his being the Meſſias. During the Space of three Years, he went about explaining all the Duties of life, and enforcing his divine Morality by the moſt winning, amiable, and condeſcending manners, the wiſeſt precepts, and all the attractive Charms and Majeſty of Example.

The Jews, incorrigible and blind, obſtinately reſiſting, oppoſing, and at length killing the Lord of Life, filled up the meaſure of their iniquity. God now permitted the Romans (provoked by their frequent inſurrections and rebellion) very ſoon after to put a final end to their Polity, utterly to deſtroy and eraſe the very foundations of their City and Temple even with a plough-ſhare; to burn their Palaces, perſecute, enſlave, and diſperſe them throughout ſo many Centuries, and over all the World, where they are yet moſt wonderfully preſerved, a people diſtinct, unmixed, ſurviving all their Conquerors, incorporated with no one Nation, Kingdom, or Empire, and although

though thus blended and ſubſiſting, they are ſtill unconnected with them all.

The Jewiſh Government was under the immediate Direction of God, eſpecially in all difficult and extraordinary Caſes.

He gave them a Code of Laws, a complete Ritual of Worſhip, ſuited to the Times and the well known Temper and Prejudices of the people; hereby, he impreſſed awfully and perſuaſively the Knowledge of Himſelf, the One only living and true God, and the Worſhip He would accept; eſtabliſhing among them Piety, Morality, public Virtue, private and domeſtic happineſs.

Jehovah was their Judge, Law-giver, and King; the High Prieſt was his Prime Miniſter; he entered into a Compact with his People, formed their Polity, and was Himſelf their Commander; He iſſued out his Orders and Rules of War; He led their Armies; He fought their Battles; the LORD of their Hoſt; the GOD of the Armies of Iſrael.

The happieſt of all Periods, the moſt enviable of all Governments.

It was a Tradition among the Jews, the World would laſt Six Thouſand Years: They divided them into three equal Periods.

FIRST, From the Creation to the Delivery of the Law by Moſes.

SECOND, The Period that Law was to remain in Force.

THIRD, Was for the Days of the MESSIAH.

Hence the Three Diſtinctions,

Under the PATRIARCHS,

the LAW, and

the MESSIAH.

The Ages have alſo been divided into Seven diſtinct Æra's.

FIRST. Ending with the Flood, 2349 Years before Chriſt.

SECOND. The ABRAHAMIC, ending at the birth of Iſhmael, 1910 Years before Chriſt.

THIRD.

THIRD. The MOSAIC, ending when MOSES was Eighty Years of Age, 1491 Years before Chriſt.

FOURTH. Begins with the Inſtitution of the Paſſover, and ends with the commencement of the Reign of Solomon, 1014 Years before Chriſt.

FIFTH. Ends with Nebuchadnezer's Conqueſt of Egypt and Judæa, 569 Years before Chriſt.

SIXTH. Ends with the Birth of OUR SAVIOUR.

ESSAY IV.

ON THE

FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES

CALLED THE

PENTATEUCH.

I. GENESIS, or Generation.

II. EXODUS, Departure out of Egypt.

III. LEVITICUS, Laws for the Priests.

IV. NUMBERS, Numbering the People.

V. DEUTERONOMY, Repetition.

GENESIS,

OR

GENERATION.

ALTHOUGH the Iſraelites were ſeparated from amidſt an Idolatrous World in order to preſerve the knowledge of the one Supreme God and Father of all, and the Purity of his Worſhip, by living all their Lives in Egypt, they had acquired a ſtrong Prejudice in favour of local Deities, and under the Impreſſion of ſuch Ideas, the Iſraelites ſuppoſed the Worſhip of them, conſiſtent, and admiſſible with that of the the Supreme JEHOVAH.

Moſes endeavours to diſſuade them, and counter-acts this Propenſity, by telling them, that THEIR God, the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, He it was who made the whole World, Sun, Moon, and Stars, and all Creatures, theſe Symbols of the Egyptian Deities, to which they ignorantly bowed and paid their Adoration.

The Book of GENESIS is the only authentic Hiſtory of the firſt Ages of the World, from the Creation to the Flood, a Period of 1656 Years, accurately preſerving the Genealogy from Adam to Noah, and you will read it in the family Hiſtory and familiar ~~domeſtic~~ Anecdotes of only nine Patriarchs *.

Moſes, our inſpired Hiſtorian, before he even gives their Names, or iſſued out his Code of Laws to inform his people of their Duty, wiſely and magnificently prefaces his Book with the Creation of the World; and the ſublime Simplicity, the gradual and methodical Proceſs, the commencement and firſt very natural Diviſion of Time, are all highly curious and wonderful.

* Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mehalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuſelah, Lamech.

That

That glorious Emanation Light, firſt-born of God, and brighteſt Emblem of his Purity, is the Work of the FIRST Day, together with the viciſſitude of Night and Day.

The elevation of the Air, forming an Atmoſphere, the SECOND.

On the THIRD day the Waters were collected, and boundaries affixed them, immediately the dry land was covered with Vegetables.

On the FOURTH, The Sun burſt forth in full Splendour, enlightening and cheriſhing the World; and in the Evening roſe the Moon in the fulneſs of her Majeſty and Glory, mildly illuminating the immenſe Expanſe, and each had its Laws affixed, and each its Courſe aſſigned it.

On the FIFTH, Fiſh ſwam innumerable in the Waters, and flying Fowl were formed, and both received a Benediction from their Creator.

On the SIXTH, The Earth having acquired Solidity, and the Air fitted for Reſpiration, the production of Land Animals followed, and God created Man, amongſt them all, the nobleſt.

With ſweet Simplicity and Elegance, it deſcribes the Primitive State of Man, and God, his Creator, places him in a fruitful and well-watered Garden, luxuriant with Herbage, Trees, and Fruits, and Flowers; and here he makes trial of the Talents he had given him, and commands him to give a Name to each and every one of the numerous Creatures around him; and Adam ſummonſes the Beaſts of the Field, and the Fowls of the Sky, and every Reptile to pay homage to their Lord, and as each one paſſed, in order before him, he affixed a Name to them all. But as theſe ſpoke only a language underſtood each by his own Species, and expreſſive of a benevolence and affection mutual and peculiar to one another, the Sovereign of this vaſt Empire ſtill moved a ſolitary and alone, unfit for the Society of pure Spirits, and yet far above the wiſeſt of the Creatures around him, impreſſed with a variety of Ideas, and inſpired with language, but no ſuitable Companion to whom he could tell his thoughts, and breathe out his affection, God is therefore pleaſed to provide for Adam, and whilſt he lay faſt aſleep, his ſenſes wearied, and ſpirits exhauſted with the vaſt variety of entertaining objects which had employed him, God formed a Woman out of his Side, of one of his ribs, and brought her and preſented her to

Adam,

Adam, arrayed with Beauty, and all the attractive charms of Grace and Modeſty.

Overjoyed, Adam declares her, the dear Companion of his Life.

In poſſeſſion of a World, Adam ſoon loſes his Sovereignty; the Diſpenſation of Innocence was ſhort; he is ſuppoſed to have enjoyed his Paradiſe only ſeven years. Diſobedience was followed with unruly paſſions, mutual upbraidings, a ſenſe of guilt, ſhame, diſguſt, remorſe, alarm, a ſentence of death, expulſion from the Garden of Paradiſe.

And now follows the Hiſtory of his two eldeſt Sons, Cain and Abel, the one, as he grew up, was a Tiller of the Ground, and Abel was a Shepherd; their Diſpoſitions were widely different, and Cain murders his Brother, an Event highly diſtreſsful to his Parents, and afforded them the firſt certain demonſtration of a future State. Two young men, brothers, the one wicked, the other righteous; the one incurred God's diſpleaſure, the other his favour; this latter, in the flower of his Youth, was murdered for his Piety, the former, though a murderer, permitted to live.

A future reckoning and retribution could only explain the hiſtory.

This

This Book will make you very inquiſitive reſpecting ENOCH, the firſt Aſtronomer and Mathamatician, the Inventor of Letters, and the uſe of the Pen, the diſtinguiſhed favour and honour granted him on account of his Piety, an Exchange of Worlds without dying. With elegant Simplicity Moſes, his hiſtorian, ſays,

" Enoch walked with God, and he was not."

The Apoſtle Paul paraphraſes it,

" By Faith Enoch was tranſlated, that he " might not ſee death, and was not found be- " cauſe God had tranſlated him, for before his " tranſlation, he had this teſtimony, that he " pleaſed God."

In theſe very early Ages God was pleaſed thus to give Men another Demonſtration reſpecting a Life to come, in order to confirm and ſtrengthen their belief.

The Hiſtory now relates the Univerſal Deluge, when it continued raining three hundred and ſeventy-ſeven Days, and exhibits the highly amiable and exemplary Character of Noah, and his diſtinguiſhed Reward. Noah was the Son of Lamech, and amidſt Scenes of debauchery, corruption, and vice, was found perfect in his Generation

ration; he alſo is ſaid to have walked with God. When the Sentence for utter Deſtruction paſſed, he alone found favour in the ſight of God, and was by him directed how to build an Ark, or Veſſel, in which Noah and his family eſcaped this tremendous and general extirpation of a World.

It gives the Genealogy, Ages, Lives, and Death of the Patriarchs, and the hiſtory of their Deſcendants, a wonderful and pleaſing account of the early Stages of the World, the rude beginnings of Order and Civilization, the Invention of Arts and Sciences, the diviſion of Mankind into Nations and Languages, the commencement of Monarchy, and the Reign of Nimrod the firſt King.

Nimrod was a famous Huntſman, and as Men lived in Tents and ſcattered Tribes, he taught them to chaſe and deſtroy the wild Beaſts, thus gaining their affection, he at length acquired a Sovereignty and Rule over them, founded two of the moſt populous and magnificent Cities, Babylon and Nineveh, and theſe roſe afterwards to be parts of the greateſt Empire in the World. A Life ſo ornamental in the Annals of Hiſtory is barely named, the irreligious are unnoticed by

Moſes,

Moſes, or mentioned with a ſeeming regret to their memory.

Nimrod began his Reign in the Year of the World 1757, and he reigned one hundred and forty-eight years.

The Story of ABRAHAM, heir of a World, with that highly exalted title God himſelf gave him,

"Abraham, my Friend."

ſuperior to all that flattery gratitude or cuſtom could beſtow, the nobleſt pattern of Faith, Obedience, and Reſignation ever recorded, a Life moſt inſtructive and glorious. After this, the the life and Hiſtory of Iſaac, becomes more and more intereſting, his filial Piety, his extraordinary Fortitude, his domeſtic Duties, his marriage, and the pleaſing perſon of Rebekah, the ſimplicity of the Times, the ſweet coincidence of little incidents at their meeting, and the birth of his two Sons. Jacob, the Father of the twelve Tribes, and Eſau, the Founder of the Edomites and Idumæans.

The Book goes on with family Anecdotes, the Mother's partiality, and the ſad miſchief it occaſioned: her favourite Son is drove from his Father's

Father's houſe, to ſave his life, and hide himſelf from Eſau. But the Goodneſs of God follows Jacob every where, and encourages him the very firſt night of his abſence. You are ſtruck with the pleaſing manner God imparted Knowledge and Comfort to this lonely Traveller; he was wandering after Sun-ſet, and not very near any Town, Jacob reſolves (though delicately brought up by his fond Mother) to make the Earth his bed, and a ſtone his pillow, thus expoſed to chills and damps, he kept muſing o'er his troubles, and perhaps the happier lot of Eſau; a welcome ſleep chaſed away his gloom, and he dreamt a dream which delighted his very Soul.

" He ſaw a Ladder, the top was above the " Clouds, and its foot ſet upon Earth, Angels " of God were aſcending and deſcending upon " it. High above all, Jacob ſaw the Lord of " Heaven, and he ſaid, I am the God of Abra- " ham, and the God of Iſaac thy Father. The " Land on which thou lieſt, to thee will I give " it, and to thy ſeed. In them ſhall the families " of all the Earth be bleſſed."

Jacob awoke awfully impreſſed, ſurely God is here, and Jacob was ſore afraid, he ſet up his Pillar, a Stone of remembrance, and he called

the neareſt Town Bethel (the Houſe of God) and its name before was Luz.

A train of intereſting and very curious events ſoon follows, which brought about the ſettling of Jacob and his family in the land of Egypt, the exquiſitely affecting and well told ſtory of Joſeph, one of his ſons, his thirteen years ſufferings, and the glorious reward of no leſs than eighty years proſperity which followed them, the highly deſcriptive meeting between him and his Brethren, long after he had been a Favourite and Prime Miniſter to Pharoah in the Egyptian Court, at that time the moſt ſplendid Court in the Univerſe.

Joſeph was the youngeſt but one of the Sons of Jacob, and ſo diſtinguiſhed and loved by his Father as to excite a Jealouſy among his Brethren. In the openneſs of his heart, Joſeph had told them his Dreams, and they ſeemed to portend dignity, and ſome advancement above them, and this heightened their envy and diſlike.

One day, all in a party together, at a diſtance from home, his Brethren conſpired againſt Joſeph, in a moment of warmth they ſeized an opportunity that offered, and threw him into a pit,

and

and afterwards meeting a Caravan of travellers for Egypt, ſold him to them for a Slave, impoſed on their Father with a lie, a falſe relation of his death. Their reſentment thus gratified, they loſt even the remembrance of it. Jacob's family was rich and powerful, they lived long in proſperity, no remorſe, of their cruelty or crimes.

Joſeph, ſafely conducted by Providence through a variety of ſcenes, trials, and dangers, roſe at laſt to be chief Favourite and Prime Miniſter to Pharoah King of Egypt, at that time the moſt powerful Monarch in the World. During this his high and elevated ſtation, a general famine waſted and ſtarved all the neighbouring Countries —There was Corn alone in Egypt—by Joſeph's foreſight, prudence, and good management plenty reigned in Egypt.

Amongſt other Sufferers from the Famine, Joſeph's Brethren reſorted thither to purchaſe corn, never once ſuſpecting who the great Governor was, that they were making application to. But Joſeph knew his Brethren. Brotherly love melted Joſeph, a burſt of affection effaced the remembrance of their cruelty, but he prudently concealed his purpoſes, and aſſumed an

appearance of ſeverity, detained one brother, and diſpatched the reſt away all with full ſacks as his family were in want, and inſiſted on their bringing into Egypt, Benjamin, his younger and his own Brother both by father and mother, and who had not been of the party when they ſold him. Joſeph's deſign was to awaken in them a ſenſe of their wrong Conduct, to revive a tenderneſs of Conſcience, though he was really preparing for them all a vaſt ſurprize of joy. Joſeph now therefore ordered his Brethren into priſon, and here, ſtrangers, confined in a foreign land, accuſed of Crimes of which they are innocent, Conſcience brings to remembrance former ſins, it recalled what Joſeph had in view, their long forgotten cruelty to him.

Nothing can affect you more than this family ſcene, the interview of Joſeph with his Brethren. He turns aſide to dry his tears, tenderly dropping on Benjamin; all impatience for the diſcovery; he locks him in his arms, mingling tears and embraces; then he went from one to the other, and hung on the necks of each of his brothers, Joſeph wept; they wept; a dead ſilence enſued; Joy, Fear, Surprife, Awe, ſtifle all expreſſion but tears.

After

After this tender and family greeting, how pleaſantly you view a picture of the times in ſweet ſimplicity and pencilled with wonderous Art,

JOSEPH entertaining and feaſting his Brethren.

The Book now gives you a minute account of the removal of Jacob and all his family into the land of Canaan, at the requeſt and invitation of Pharoah, who forwarded a large ſtore of Proviſions and Carriages for themſelves and their baggage, and ten aſſes laden with fruit and the choiceſt commodities, and the King ſent him the kindeſt meſſages, and the moſt hearty invitation to all his family and houſhould.

It alſo relates the deſtruction of two famous Cities in the vale of Siddim, Sodom, and Gomorrah, under the government of two ſeparate Monarchs.

God was pleaſed to reveal his intentions reſpecting them to his Servant Abraham, the cities were both deſtroyed, and at Abraham's importunate intreaties, Lot, who was his near relation, was miraculouſly ſaved.

Here

Here are many entertaining anecdotes, highly curious, both before and after his deliverance, the Uncle and the Nephew had once lived together, and on account of the very great increaſe of their flocks, (the riches of thoſe days) they agreed to ſeparate, and Lot moved Eaſtward, and pitched his tents in a delightful vale not far from Sodom, and he afterwards reſided within the city gates, and was there, when the deſtroying Angel came down to execute the wrath of the Almighty, and the Angel himſelf led him at day-break, with all his family to a neighbouring city, named Zoar, which was ſpared on his account alone; they had no ſooner got to this little city than immediately thunder, lightning, and a moſt horrible tempeſt, deſtroyed Sodom and all its numerous inhabitants. A ſingular puniſhment was inflicted on Lot's wife, in the very act of diſobedience ſhe was turned into a pillar of ſalt, and Joſephus, the Jewiſh Hiſtorian, ſaw it ſtanding in his days, and many other authors atteſt the truth of that very ſingular event.

Beſides theſe two famous cities, there were ſeveral others ſituated near them on the plains of the river Jordan, at the ſame time, and in the ſame very tremendous manner deſtroyed, and a filthy Lake, called the Dead Sea, (as no fiſh what-

whatever will live in it) fills up almoſt all the plain.

The dying words of Abraham and his ſon Iſaac are never told us, but on winding up his book of Geneſis, in language pathetic and divinely eloquent, Moſes minutely related all that paſſed at the houſe of Jacob during thoſe very intereſting moments at his death.

On hearing he was ſick Joſeph pays a viſit to his Father, and carries with him his two ſons, a meſſenger runs before to tell of his coming. Jacob ſtrengthened himſelf, aſſuming all the Father, and on Joſeph's entering the room, after their firſt embraces, he enquired who the Children were, and Joſeph ſaid,

" Ephraim and Manaſſeh, my two ſons, they " are come to aſk a bleſſing of my Father."

Jacob inſtantly replies,

" Your ſons are mine, even as Simeon and " Reuben." (naming the two eldeſt)

The ſight of Joſeph very naturally led the old man's thoughts to his Mother, and he tells him,

" Rachel

" Rachel your mother died by me, and I
" buried her at Ephrath. Joſeph, where are
" your boys? bring them to me and I will bleſs
" them. I did not think, Joſeph, of ſeeing thy
" face, how good is God who gives me alſo
" your children to ſee?"

and Jacob embraced and kiſſed them both—a tender greeting—Joſeph took them himſelf from out his arms, and from between his knees, but overcome with the ſcene Joſeph fell on his face before his Father. When he aroſe, Jacob bleſſed Joſeph, and pronounced an unexpected bleſſing on the children, deſignedly ſetting the younger far in honours above his brother, and Joſeph's remonſtrance only confirmed the diſtinction and prophetic bleſſing of the Grandfather.

As Joſeph was taking his leave, his Father tells him,

" Behold, I die; but, Joſeph, God will per-
" form his Promiſe! You will ſee in my Will
" a portion to thee more than to thy brothers,
" with my ſword and my bow I took it from the
" Amorites."

Jacob alluded to Seehem, and in the ſubſequent diſtribution of the lands, this parcel of ground was,

was without any oppoſition, added over and above to the Portion of Ephraim.——The following Chapter records Jacob's dying words to his Sons, when they were all aſſembled round their Father's bed. Jacob lays his hand on each of them, beginning with the eldeſt, and in words moſt awfully impreſſive, utters a ſtriking Propheſy, big with events of the future over each and every one of them; after which, with dignity and compoſure, he gave his laſt directions reſpecting his Funeral, minutely deſcribing and dwelling largely on the place, to ſhew how much his heart was ſet on being buried there: Fatigued, yet gratified with theſe laſt duties, and this parting interview, Jacob gathered up his feet, compoſed himſelf to reſt, awaiting a peaceful ſlumber and the diſmiſſion which very ſpeedily followed.

The laſt Chapter relates his Son Joſeph's affectionate kiſs even after he was dead, and Joſeph gave immediate directions for his Embalment, and orders for a general mourning throughout Egypt, and it laſted threeſcore and ten days.

During the firſt thirty, after the entrails were removed, the body was covered over with Saltpetre to harden the fleſh and dry up the moiſture; the remaining forty were employed in rubbing the body and filling up the cavities with odoriferous

Gums and the richeſt Spices, they then wound rolls of filletting round and round the body and limbs, they ſometimes uſed a thouſand Ells, and laſtly, they covered all over with a rich Gum which they uſed inſtead of glue. The art was performed with ſo much ſkill that the reſemblance was retained, and the features very often traced.

At the expiration of ſeventy days, in princely pomp the funeral proceſſion commenced: Joſeph chief mourner, then followed all the Nobles of the Egyptian Court, the Officers of State, Civil and Military, all the Houſehold of Joſeph, and his Brethren, and his Father's Houſe, a long train of Chariots and Horſemen for accommodation and defence, and a great multitude followed.

This Book relates the tranſactions of 2369 years, diſplays the moſt intereſting of all Scenes ever yet recorded. It carries you back to the beginning of Time, to mankind in infancy, to Societies yet forming, when Men only lived in Tents and ſcattered Tribes, and family converſation and domeſtic events compoſed all the materials for Hiſtory; it tells you all with wonderful ſimplicity, and finiſhes with the Death of Joſeph; he had lived eighty years highly honoured in the Court of Pharoah, and died at the age of one hundred and ten.

His

His Body was firſt embalmed, and then buried at Sechem, where a moſt magnificent Monument was erected to his memory.

'Tis a Hiſtory of many curious, very intereſting and extraordinary Events, ſome highly exalted Characters and powerful excitements to Virtue.

EXODUS,

OR

EMIGRATION.

THIS wonderful Prodigy, or rather this ſeries of Prodigies, the Delivery of the Children of Iſrael out of the land of Egypt, is ſaid to be mentioned no leſs than a thouſand times in the Old Teſtament, and is throughout held up to view, as the moſt aſtoniſhing proof of the Patronage and Power of Almighty God.

The Book of Exodus commences with a liſt of the Family of Jacob, who firſt accepted the King's Invitation, and took up their Reſidence in Egypt

at

at the time of the Famine—Children and Grandchildren, only, of that Patriarch.

By comparing ſo ſmall a Root with the immenſe Multitude which ſprang from it, you will witneſs the wonderful Providence of God fulfilling all his Promiſes.

The book proceeds on with the Hiſtorian's own Birth, and you have here related, the very curious Plot laid for his Preſervation, a Providential contrivance, introductory to his liberal education in all the wiſdom and learning of the Eaſt.

Amram, his Father, viewed with Horror, the cruel Edict Pharoah had iſſued out, that every Hebrew Male Child which ſhould be born, be caſt into the River Nile and there drowned either by the Parents or the Egyptian Taſk-maſter, and He was much the more diſtreſſed, as he every day expected the birth of another Child; whilſt Amram was devoutly pleading with God, it was revealed to him, that the Iſraelites ſhould ſhortly be freed from their oppreſſive yoke, and that his ſon, now about to be born, ſhould be the glorious inſtrument of their Deliverance. Amram therefore carefully concealed him three months, he was at that time under the ſad neceſſity of expoſing

poſing him, as is here moſt entertainingly told with a minute, curious and intereſting detail of incidents, wonderfully coinciding, and all tending to his preſervation and future deſtiny.

THE Providence of God conducts a Princeſs, in her evening walk to the River ſide, ſhe ſaw the ruſhy cradle floating up and down, and ſpied the little beauty, lovely, innocent and in tears, ſo expoſed to danger (which it never knew), ſhe was all Pity and Admiration, reſcues herſelf the child, adopts it as her own, unknowingly hires its Mother for its wet nurſe, orders them all to the Palace, and brings him up under the firſt Maſters, the learned Magi, and all the high education and advantages of a Court.

GOD in due time appeared to Moſes encircled in a flame of fire repreſenting a burning Buſh. Moſes ſtepped aſide, and ſtood wondering the Buſh was not conſumed. God here condeſcendingly called to him by name, Moſes, Moſes, and he anſwers, Lord, here am I, (God now ſpeaks again)—" I am the God of thy Fathers, the God of Abraham, of Iſaac, and of Jacob. Abaſhed and ſore affraid, Moſes hid his face: a moſt awful and highly intereſting parly and interview ending in electing him Deliverer, Leader, and Head over Iſrael.

MOSES

Moses thus ſignally inveſted, enters upon his high office, and accompanied by his Brother Aaron, God commiſſions him to go to the Egyptian Court, then the moſt ſplendid Court in all the World, and demand the Releaſe of his Countrymen. God reveals to Moſes that haughty Monarch's obſtinacy and refuſal, and the miraculous means He would employ to reſcue them from his tyranny.

Ten very wonderful Miracles are minutely recorded, and at laſt the Egyptian Prince did give orders for their departure---but his heart relented, furiouſly he purſued them, and himſelf with all his hoſt, were every one of them drowned: for God, in order to give his People an undeniable proof of his Patronage and Power, opened a paſſage through the Red Sea, having purpoſely led them that way to the wilderneſs of Etham. The Iſraelites walked through as on dry ground; Pharoah and his Army by raſhly venturing to purſue them, were every one of them loſt.

God commanded Moſes, and he waved his Rod over the mighty Waters; a fierce Eaſt Wind dried up the Sea, and the Waters roſe a heap, a Wall on the right hand and on the left; in the Morning Watch juſt at Day-break, Pharoah and his Chariots

Chariots and his Horſemen almoſt came up to them, juſt on their ſetting foot on the other Shore. Moſes waved his Rod again over the Sea; the Waters reſumed their wonted Channel, and covered all the Purſuers; none, no not one of them eſcaped: the dead Carcaſes floated on the Sea and they covered the ſhore.

Moses was ſo encouraged and elated with this ſo ſignal a Miracle and deliverance, that in a Song of Triumph, high Sublimity and the boldeſt Figures, he indulges himſelf in tranſports and burſts of joy and gratitude. This memorable Event, together with the ſafe Paſſage of the Iſraelites, was ever after commemorated in an abiding Sacrament called the Paſſover.

According to the dying requeſt of Joseph, the Iſraelites had collected his bones, and carefully carried them through all their wanderings; they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, on the borders of the Wilderneſs; their Guide, a bright Cloud moved on before them all the day (and to render it more viſible) it was illumined by Night.

"Throughout their whole Journey he took not "away the Cloud by Day, nor the Pillar of Fire "by Night."

While

While they were here encamped, JETHRO the Midian Prieſt, Moſes' Father-in-law, overtook them, and he brought with him Moſes' Wife, and his two Sons; and Jethro made a great Feaſt, and invited all the Princes of Iſrael, a general Joy on the Succeſs of their Reſcue, and his Son Moſes' new Government. Moſes ſat as Judge from Morning untill Night, inſtructing and counſelling his People, and at Jethro's perſuaſion he now made choice of ſome of the wiſeſt of his Elders to aſſiſt him.

Important Revelations were made to the Iſraelites in the Wilderneſs.

Three Months after they ſet out they arrived at the foot of Mount Sinai, the higheſt and moſt inacceſſible Mountain in the Eaſt, and held ſacred by all the Inhabitants around;—here the Iſraelites halted, they aſſembled at the foot and beheld the Mountain all on Fire, ſurrounded with blackneſs and darkneſs and tempeſt, they heard the awful Voice of God pronounce the Eternal Law, thus impreſſively ſtamping it on their Minds and Memories for ever.

The Original Laws of Morality and Equity, re[illegible]aled to the Conſcience, and impreſſed on the

Heart, defaced and forgot, were now wrote on Tables of Stone, and thus awfully reſtored to the Jews, and inſtitutions were added by Moſes, grateful acknowledgments of paſt deliverances, and powerful checks to the torrent of Vice and Impiety, expreſsly deſigned to fix inviolable Barriers between the Jews and the Idolatrous Nations around them.

You have here the beſt ſyſtem and code of Laws ever exhibited, and they were ever after the ſtanding Municipal Laws of the Iſraelites. Our Saviour expreſsly calls the book "The Book of Moſes," reverences the Jewiſh Laws, and quotes no leſs than five and twenty paſſages out of Exodus.

This Book relates a ſeries of Wonders, and is a Hiſtory highly entertaining and inſtructive. A miraculous Reſcue from the Tyranny of Pharoah and the Land of Egypt, where they had at firſt been invited as Gueſts, but now long treated as Rebels and Slaves, inured to oppreſſion and bondage.

It contains the Tranſactions of one hundred and forty-five years, and many of theſe Events are confirmed by the Teſtimony of Heathen Writers.

Some

Some of its Propheſies were accompliſhed in the life-time of Moſes; their Reſcue* and Deliverance: Others were fulfilled ſoon after his death, as the Conqueſt of Canaan, Diviſion and Allotment of the Land, ſubſequent Revolutions, Subjections and Captivity.

Towards the latter end you will read God's expreſs Command, reverentially to keep Holy the Sabbath†: and God condeſcendingly reaſons with His people, and fixes the Obſervance of it, a perpetual Sign to ſubſiſt between Him and his People for ever.

The Book concludes with Directions how to form the Ark and Tabernacle; the Conſecration of it, the Ceremonies of Anointing Aaron, and his Sons, their Purification, and the new and ſuperb Dreſſes with which they were henceforward to be adorned and diſtinguiſhed by: A very ſolemn and perpetual Election, an everlaſting Prieſthood confined to his Family, throughout their generations.

The Ark was conſtructed, and a Veil to cover it all over; a Tent was aſſigned it, after which

* Chapter the ſeventh. † Chapter the thirty-ſecond.

the viſible appearance of the Glory of God filled the Tabernacle in which it was depoſited, and it always regulated their ſtay, directed them when they were to renew their March and purſue their Journey, a Cloud by Day, a Fire by Night.

When this Cloud majeſtically roſe above the Tent and became viſible over it, Iſrael's ſtanding Orders were to march forward under the Protection and good Guidance of their God.

LEVITICUS.

LAWS and REGULATIONS of the PRIESTS.

A BOOK which takes its Name from the Patriarch LEVI, and relates the Functions and Religious Ceremonies of the Levites, who were male deſcendants of Levi, and miniſterial Aſſiſtants and principal Agents in the Sacrifices and Services of the Sanctuary.

It contains many Promiſes and Threatnings, excitements to Virtue, and to a ſtrict obſervance of the Laws: It explains the Nature of the Jewiſh Prieſthood, the ſuperb Dreſſes they were henceforward to be diſtinguiſhed by, and their high Honours and Dignity. It eſtabliſhes their Civil Œconomy and the Divine legation of Moſes.

The firſt ſeven Chapters are Directions and Duties enjoined the Prieſts; Aaron's Conſecration

tion and his Son's are related in the eighth, and the Habits deſcribed with which Moſes himſelf dreſſed them: Moſt ſplendid and ſignificant was the High Prieſt's; a gorgeous Mitré and a plate of Gold called the Holy Crown, a rich flowing Robe and over it a breaſt-plate of Gold, and the Emblems of Light and Perfection called Urim and Thummim. When thus magnificently attired, in the ſubſequent Chapters many Offices and Employments are aſſigned him. In the tenth you are ſtruck with the awful Hiſtory of Nadab and Abihu, Aarons' two Sons, who were ſtruck dead at the Altar, imprudently offering Incenſe with common Fire, inſtead of that which was to fall from Heaven. Aaron was ſorely diſtreſſed, but he held his peace, ſilently witneſſing the Sovereignty and Juſtice of God, vindicating his Honour and enforcing Obedience to his Laws; in a public and exemplary manner puniſhing an open and ſcandalous violation and breach, by thoſe who ſhould have been ſtrict Obſervers and Aſſertors of them. Aaron, and his other Sons, were yet officiating, and Moſes in order to prevent a ſtop to the Ceremonies and Holy Functions, called to him Miſhael and Elzaphan, two young men, and ordered them to remove the bodies, and bury them juſt as they were, without ſtripping off any part of their dreſs.

In the Sixteenth Chapter a yearly ſolemn Feaſt is enjoined the whole Nation, to be an everlaſting Statue, an annual Attonement for the Sins of the People.

Prohibitions and Precepts, Laws and Directions are continued on to the twenty-fifth, where a remarkable Prophecy is recorded, and its regular conſtant Accompliſhment afforded the Iſraelites a ſtanding Miracle, and moſt convincing proof of the divine Inſpiration of their Lawgiver: "I will command my Bleſſing on you in the ſixth Year, and it ſhall bring forth fruit for three Years, and ye ſhall ſow the eighth Year, and eat yet of the old Fruit until the ninth Year; until her Fruits come in, ye ſhall eat of the old Store." This regularly came to paſs, and as long as the Law was reverenced, an ample Supply and Proviſion was made for the Sabbatic year. Beſides this, every fiftieth year was to be a Jubilee, when every Iſraelite of every denomination, was commanded, in the moſt public manner, to ſound his Trumpet nine ſeveral times, and proclaim "Liberty! — Liberty!" — throughout all the Land. Freedom to all Servants and Slaves,—A Releaſe to the Poor of all Debts, and a Reſtoration to their Poſſeſſions and former Inheritance.

The

The Land too was to enjoy Reſt, they were neither to ſow, nor reap, nor put up into Barns any overplus whatever, though it grew luxuriant and ſpontaneous. Many advantages aroſe to the Iſraelites from this wiſe Inſtitution. Ambition was prudently reſtrained, an Eſtate never went out of a man's family; thoſe who had been ſold, returned now every Man to his own Houſe; Public tranquility and undiſturbed poſſeſſion was a neceſſary conſequence, and a promiſe of unbounded proſperity was announced as a reward and an encouragement to fidelity.

The laſt year of our Saviour's Life, was the year of Jubilee, and the laſt the Jews ever kept; for from the ſeventh year after their entrance into Canaan, there were juſt 1400 years to the thirty-third of Our Saviour's Life, which gives juſt twenty-eight Jubilees.

The ſecond year from their departure out of Egypt this Book is ſaid to have been delivered to them by Moſes, in the year of the World 2524.

It contains only the actions of one Month, and pronounces bleſſings on all thoſe who obſerve its Precepts and a moſt awful curſe on the Tranſgreſſor.

NUMBERS.

ON THE BOOK OF

NUMBERS.

THIS Book takes its Name from the many numberings reported in it, and the firſt is very remarkable; the Men of War from twenty years old and upwards, in the ſecond year from their leaving Egypt, amounted to ſix hundred and three thouſand five hundred and fifty, beſides Levites. The eight firſt Chapters contain further Directions and additional Laws for the Prieſts and the Sanctuary, and afterwards an Account of the Spies ſent out as Searchers to diſcover the Land of Canaan. The remaining part of the Book carries on their Hiſtory and Journey, Travels, Troubles, Murmurings and Rebellions, their Sufferings, Streights and Enlargements, Dangers and Deliverances, Conqueſts and Notable things they did or ſuffered during the ſpace of thirty-nine years, wherein they rather wandered than regularly journeyed in the Deſert,

their Vices, Obſtinacy and Rebellion, keeping them back from the borders of Canaan, when they were very near, almoſt in poſſeſſion of it. In the eleventh Chapter their murmurings are ſeverely reproved, and very many are deſtroyed by Lightning. To aſſiſt Moſes in his ardous taſk of Government, ſeventy Elders are now elected, and they have their different Offices allotted them.

The Iſraelites had long murmured and ſighed for fiſh, and onions, and leeks, a ſavoury and very cheap food among them. God was diſpleaſed with their ingratitude and complainings, and ſent them ſo very great a profuſion of Quails that they covered the ground two cubits high around all their Camps, but the murmurers were very ſhortly afterwards all deſtroyed by a Peſtilence.

In the twelfth Chapter Miriam and Aaron's ſedition is related, and Miriam's puniſhment: ſhe was inſtantly led out from the Camp a Leper as white as ſnow. In the ſixteenth Chapter the conſpiracy and rebellion of Korah is awfully puniſhed with an Earthquake. The thirteenth and fourteenth Chapters record the Names, Inſtructions and Acts of the Spies ſent to inſpect the Land of Canaan, together with the People's ungrateful

ungrateful murmurings, and the threatnings of God for their diſobedience. The ſeventeenth appropriates the High Prieſthood to the family of Aaron by a very ſignal Miracle, the bloſſoming of Aaron's Rod; after ſuch a warning and prohibition no one would dare uſurp the Prieſthood. The death both of Miriam and Aaron are recorded in the twentieth, and the manner in which Aaron was firſt diveſted of his dignity and prieſtly Habits, the Enſigns of his Office. Moſes, and Eleazar, Aaron's Son, accompanied the High Prieſt up a high Mountain named Hor, and there, in the ſight of all the People, Aaron ſtripped off his prieſtly Robes, and put them himſelf upon his Son. At the age of ninety-three Aaron here died, and they buried him on the Mountain and on the ſpot he died.

The Iſraelites were now encamped in the deſert of Zin, and almoſt famiſhed for want of Water: On Moſes' application to God, he was commanded to ſtrike the Rock with his Rod, and inſtantly the waters guſhed out in great abundance for them and all their Cattle.

The twenty-firſt Chapter relates ſundry Journeys and freſh murmurings; the People cry out "We ſhall die in the Wilderneſs, there is no Bread, there is no Water, our Soul loath-

eth this light bread:" Such diſtruſt and upbraidings diſpleaſed God, and He withdrew from them his extraordinary Providence; and fiery Serpents, a moſt pernicious Plague in that Deſert, but hitherto kept from hurting them, ſtung the Iſraelites ſo diſtreſsfully that many of them died. On Moſes' Prayer for his People, the miſchief was very ſhortly removed. God commanded Moſes to erect on a high pole the figure of a brazen Serpent, on which every one who had been bit might look up to, and obtain a Cure. A circumſtance and reference alluded to by our Saviour. and very ſtrickingly applied.

This Chapter is elegantly enlivened by two beautiful Odes; one a Song of the Children of Iſrael, and the other a Song of Triumph, by an Amorite bard on a Conqueſt over Moab: The former joyouſly exults on a ſeaſonable ſupply of Water God had kindly ſent them before they aſked it; and the latter is a pleaſing and very ancient Ode, abounding with lofty metaphors and is only introduced here to ſhew that this Country belonged to the Amorites, and not the Moabites, when the Iſraelites ſubdued it.

In the twenty-ſecond is recorded the miracu-

lous Speech of Balaam's Aſs. Balaam was a Prophet, although a heathen and an immoral Man. He came from Amram among the Mountaneous parts of the Eaſt, and exhibited a ſtrange mixture of Divination, Enchantments, and Prophecy, but Balaam in thoſe days, was held in ſuch high Repute, that Balak King of Moab, and the Princes of Midian came from very diſtant Countries, and would fain have brought him back with them, to utter a curſe upon Iſrael.

Very ſingular and expreſs are the Propheſies of Balaam. "A ſtar ſhall come out of Jacob, and a ſceptre ſhall ariſe out of Iſrael, and ſhall ſmite the corners of Moab, and deſtroy all the Children of Sheth. Iſrael ſhall do valiantly."

In the twenty-fifth Chapter Iſrael's licentiouſneſs and Idolatry are puniſhed by a Peſtilence; no leſs than four and twenty thouſand of the People are deſtroyed, and Zimri a ringleader, for a lawleſs and open act of Infamy was murdered on the ſpot, together with Cozbi his confederate, though ſhe was a Princeſs of the Houſe of Moab. In the twenty-ſixth Iſrael is again numbered, and notwithſtanding the late awful deſtruction, they amounted to 601,730. Amongſt theſe the Land of Canaan was ordered to be divided.

Soon

Soon after this Moſes was informed by God that he ſhould die, and that He had appointed Joſhua his General to ſucceed him in his Government: Undiſturbed at the awful Summons, and feeling no terror at the near approach and ſolemn exchange, Moſes buſily employed every moment in tranſmitting down, throughout the remaining Chapters, the Laws of God, and the Duties of Life; impreſſing them moſt ſtrenuouſly on the Minds of the People, and he gave to Joſhua and Eleazar the High Prieſt, his laſt directions reſpecting the diviſion of the Land among the Twelve Tribes by lot; appointing the Six Cities of Refuge for the Manſlayer, and allotting the ſpoils they had already acquired. The Iſraelites in this Book are conducted into the Land of Canaan.

DEUTERONOMY

ON THE BOOK OF

DEUTERONOMY

OR

REPETITION.

THIS Name ſignifies the ſecond Law. It is a Recapitulation of all the former Hiſtory, and Moſes wrote it only two Months before he died.

He had already publiſhed his Book of Genealogy, two others of their Travels, and a Code of Laws and Regulations for the Prieſts. He had toiled long and laboured hard to root out their prejudices, obſtinacy, and ingratitude; and now juſt on the point of leaving them. He preſents them

them with a Manual of Inſtructions, and bequeaths it for general uſe; Precepts and Laws, Civil, Religious, and Military, a teſtimony of his Love, and his laſt Bleſſing and Legacy to his People. He was acquainted with their tempers, well knew of what ſpirits they were of, and he winningly encourages ſome, and others he alarms by his threats, devoutly praying for all that God would guide and bleſs his People.

By the moſt pathetic and forcible motives, the Virtues of Piety, Juſtice, Charity, Humanity and Fortitude are all inculcated. With fervent zeal Moſes invokes the People devoutly to worſhip God. He recounts the amazing wonders God had already wrought for Iſrael, his many and glorious Promiſes to the obedient, together with his moſt awful denunciations againſt the tranſgreſſor.

This moſt excellent Code of Laws, both Civil and Religious, were ever after the ſtanding Municipal Laws of the Iſraelites. At a very ſhort diſtance of time, God had commanded Moſes to aſcend a high Mountain called Nebo, and from thence he was permitted to take a view of the Promiſed Land. He is now further informed he ſhould ſhortly die, and on that very ſpot. With perfect ſerenity and compoſure Moſes received the

the awful news, and notwithſtanding the Summons, he zealouſly goes on purſuing the duties of Life, the great buſineſs allotted him. Undiſturbed by the terrors of the exchange, Moſes continues tranſmitting down to his People the Laws of God, of Life and Eternity; ſettling the Moral, Civil, and Religious ſyſtem he was earneſtly explaining and enforcing.

He had experienced many hardſhips, much fatigue, and ſuffered many mortifications from the ignorance, the obſtinacy, the frequent murmurings and diſſatisfaction of the People. At the cloſe of life, Moſes ſeems to have had more enlightened proſpects of futurity, and he hoped to meet a peaceful ſlumber in the grave. He had no Ambition to gratify, no wiſh that his Dignities and Honours ſhould deſcend to his Children; but was well ſatisfied with the appointment of Joſhua, who had long been his General and his Servant. He buſily employed every moment in adjuſting the concerns of his Government; and his firſt care was, in the moſt public and ſolemn manner, to expreſs his approbation and confirm the ſettlement to his ſucceſſor, leſt any of his own family ſhould afterwards oppoſe it. Moſes aſſembled all the Tribes of Iſrael, the Elders, Magiſtrates and Rulers, and before them all, he laid his hand upon Joſhua

preſented him himſelf to the High Prieſt for Conſecration, zealouſly commanded him, in caſes of all difficulty and emergence whatever, to addreſs himſelf to God. Moſes then ordered them to blow up the trumpets, and proclaim him throughout the Camp, Head, Leader and Chief over Iſrael.

So much in poſſeſſion of himſelf, and enjoying a peaceful calm, Moſes ſat down and compoſed a Commemorative Hymn, pathetically exhorting his People to conſider their latter end, and it opens with inimitable beauty, arreſting your attention with ſurpriſe, and then goes on with ſweet and familiar ſimilies, referring you to the invigorating effects of the ſoft Shower and dropping Dew, and applying the ſentiment to his Song in ſoftening the Heart and making it fruitful. The elegant atteſtation to the praiſe of God, in the fourth verſe, is uſed by the Jews, a funeral Ode at their burials.

Moſes lived to ſee the total overthrow of the Midianites, and he divided all their ſpoils. One half he allotted to the Conquerors, and one half to thoſe who ſtaid at home, excepting one fifteenth part of the whole, which he gave to the Levites and Prieſts.

As the Iſraelites were on the eve of entering on the

the Promiſed Land, Moſes' Addreſs was wonderfully encouraging and excited all their attention:

" Hear O Iſrael,—Thou art this day to paſs over
" Jordan, and encounter with Nations greater
" and mightier than thyſelf; Cities fenced up
" to Heaven; a People huge and tall; but know
" ye that the Lord thy God He goeth before thee,
" as a conſuming fire ſhall He deſtroy them."

After this he appointed the exact limits they were firſt to conquer, and affixed the diſtributions by lot, committing the whole care of it to Joſhua and Eleazar the High Prieſt, before the Heads and Chiefs of Iſrael. Moſes named the forty-eight Cities allotted to the Tribe of Levi, and the ſix Cities of Refuge, where the Manſlayer was to fly, and three he named on this ſide and thee on the other ſide Jordan.

So fully convinced were the Iſraelites of the Divine Original of their Laws, and ſuch their reſpect and veneration for their Lawgiver, that no one Tribe for many ages ever encroached on the limits of another. As his end drew nigh, Moſes was very ſolicitous to finiſh well his very arduou taſk. He had now attained to the age of one hundred and twenty; his ſight perfect and his ſtrength

unimpaired: He for the laſt time gathered all the Tribes about him, drops the character of the Hiſtorian and addreſſes himſelf to his People, affectionately pronouncing his laſt farewel and ſolemn bleſſing on every ſeparate Tribe apart, and in language the ſtrongeſt, moſt eloquent, and divinely Prophetic.

The Preface and Concluſion of theſe his laſt and dying words, is couched in a ſtile enkindling the flame of devotion. Kings were directed to write for themſelves a Copy, and read it every day; it was to be engraven on ſtones, and placed on every high-way, it was to be carried with them over Jordan, to be ſolemnly read every ſeventh year, in the hearing of all the People of Iſrael, purpoſely convened and aſſembled.

Attended by Joſhua and Eleazar the High Prieſt to the foot of the Mountain, where they took a ſorrowful and affectionate leave, Moſes went up the hill alone, in full poſſeſſion of his Powers and Faculties, his eyes not dim, nor his natural force abated; he died at the age of one hundred and twenty.

Moſes was highly honoured as a Prophet, with whom God ſpake Mouth to Mouth.—A Divine Lawgiver, the founder of their civil and religious

Polity

Polity—inveſted with the power of performing Miracles, and he exerciſed it at the Egyptian Court, over the mighty Waters, and in the Wilderneſs—he fed this immenſe multitude, day by day, and the plenty left, was of itſelf a miracle—faithful in all his houſe—open and generous in his temper—admirably blending fortitude with meekneſs—pious, wiſe, and zealous for God—unweariedly laborious, a Father to his People, prefering affliction with them to the treaſures of Egypt—ſo unambitious and diſintereſted, as to appoint a ſtranger to his Government, to the excluſion of his own family. Amazing were his Powers, as a Poet, an Hiſtorian, a Legiſlator and a Stateſman.

This faithful, highly favoured Servant of God, had been wonderfully protected in infancy and child-hood, adopted by a Princeſs, amidſt the luxury of an Egyptian Court, liberally educated in all the learning of the Eaſt, elected to his high honours at the voice of God, bleſſed with daily intercourſe, the moſt winning condeſcention and familiar converſe with Him, as friend with friend—admitted to immediate acceſs. Did his People want Water, the dry rock poured them out rivers; did they want Food, He ſent it them down from Heaven; were they naked, He cloath-

ed-

ed them all; His preſence filled the Tabernacle, He ſat upon the Mercy Seat, authoriſing their ſtay, and in a bright cloud, majeſtically roſe, and became viſible above the Tent, when Moſes and his People, were to march forwards, under the ſafe guidance and protection of God; did his People rebel, peſtilence or devouring flames conſumed the murmurers, or an earthquake ſwallowed them up; one, encircled in the higheſt dignities, for unjuſt reflections on Moſes and his family, walked from the Camp a loathſome Leper, diſgracefully polluted and forlorn; did they encounter with powerful enemies, He fought their battles, the Lord of their Hoſts, the God of the Army's of Moſes; a wiſe and able Tutor, he employed his life in inſtructing them, diveſting his People of prejudice, and training them up for the Promiſed Land; at its borders only, Moſes arrived, God here informed him he ſhould die; undiſturbed by the ſummons, with fortitude and zeal, he kept handing down the laws of life, explaining its duties, and enforcing his precepts. By ſound of trumpet, Moſes proclaimed his ſucceſſor, preſented him himſelf to Eleazar, and after a tender greeting, and moſt affectionate leave at the foot of the Mount, he aſcended the hill, was permitted only a bare ſight of Canaan, after which

which Moſes died. Thus he lived with God, on earth, and was ſo peaceably taken home.

A character of ſuch glorious pre-emience and unwearied affiduity for the public good, will be revered, highly honored and beloved for ever.

Iſrael wept for Moſes, on the plains of Moab thirty days, and there aroſe no Prophet ſince in Iſrael, like to Moſes, whom God knew face to

ESSAY V.

ON THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

JOSHUA, this diſtinguiſhed Hero and highly celebrated General, was the Son of Nun, and appointed by God, ſucceſſor to Moſe's; Head Leader and Chief over Iſrael: and was again by ſound of trumpet proclaimed throughout the Camp, on the plains of Moab, his new territories and acquiſition.

After a ſpeech of Joſhua's, in which he officially informed the Iſraelites of the intended diviſion of the Land of Canaan among the Twelve Tribes, and particularized the Lands allotted to Reuben and Gad, and to one half of the Tribe of Manaſſeh, not only the Heads of theſe Tribes, but the Elders and Leaders of all the People, eagerly

eagerly concurring with the divine appointment, came up in a body to Joſhua, and ſwore allegiance to him.

" We ſolemnly engage to pay the ſame Obe-
" dience to thee, we paid to Moſes :—God bleſs
" and proſper thee, as He did Moſes."

Joſhua had lived high in the eſteem of his Commander, and he was reverenced and beloved by the People. He had long been Head, General and Chief over all the Forces of Iſrael ; and he was one of the twelve deputed by Moſes to examine the Promiſed Land as to its ſoil, fruitfulneſs, inhabitants, and fortifications ; the report he made, widely differed from the report given in by ten out of the twelve, ſent on the ſame embaſſy, and it gained him much credit and the confidence and reſpect of his Commander.

During almoſt all the journey and wanderings in the Wilderneſs, Joſhua had been trained up by Moſes, an eye-witneſs to the wonderful works God had wrought for Iſrael, and he had been inſtructed in the genius and diſpoſition of the People, the land and its inhabitants, which he was now preparing to enter with his very numerous hoſt, and of which he had already given in

a faithful detail and account recorded in their regiſter: Thus Joſhua ſeemed highly qualified for the important and very intereſting duties and honours allotted him.

Well appriſed of the many difficulties and dangers before him, under ſo very arduous an undertaking, nothing could have ſupported Joſhua but reliance on God, and he now received more and very expreſs and ſignal promiſes of divine protection and aſſiſtance; the moſt animating encouragement, directions and aſſurances of conqueſt:—

"As I was with Moſes, ſo will I be with thee; "be ſtrong, be of good courage, fear not, nor "be thou diſmayed, the Lord thy God is with "thee whitherſoever thou goeſt."

The original edict was, "From the Wilder-"neſs and this Lebanon, even unto the great "river, the river Euphrates, all the Land of the "Hittites, and unto the great Sea, towards the go-"ing down of the Sun ſhall be your coaſt; every "place between that, and which the ſole of your "foot ſhall tread on, that have I given unto you."

At the death of Moſes, the Iſraelites were encamped at Shittim, on the banks of the river Jordan,

dan, in full view of Canaan, and here it was they mourned one whole month for their General. The People He had ſo unweariedly inſtructed, and ſo wiſely governed, were grown more tractable and more fully perſuaded of the good guidance and protection of their God; they were now only waiting for a ſignal from their new General, and their orders to paſs over Jordan.

Joſhua had diſpatched three Expreſſes to the Canaanites. The firſt gave leave for all thoſe to depart who choſe it; the ſecond were articles of Peace, to thoſe who would make Peace; the third was a declaration of War to thoſe who refuſed. He ſaw himſelf indeed at the head of ſix hundred thouſand fighting men, completely furniſhed with arms, which they had procured from Egypt, the Amalekites, their new conqueſts, and others; but he was clogged with a number of old men, women, children, ſervants and cattle: The very firſt ſtep he was to take, was to croſs over this immenſe river, and at this ſeaſon it was in its full ſwell, and overflowed its banks; the croſſing over he well knew expoſed him to the arms of thoſe he was attacking, as well as to thoſe enemies he left behind, the countries of Sihon and Og which they had only lately conquered. The Canaanites themſelves were a warlike People of gigantic ſta-

ture; their Cities walled, ſtrongly fortified by nature and art; all the intereſts of the ſeveral Nations and all their Forces united by the firmeſt alliance, ſelf-preſervation, almoſt ſelf-exiſtence: They had long taken the alarm, had made all the preparations in their power to oppoſe his deſign, fiercely reſolved to obſtruct his entrance, oppoſe his conqueſt, or die.

Joſhua now ſelected out two very bold and confidential Servants, ſent them very privily away to Jericho, the firſt City on the other ſide, about eight miles from Jordan; they croſſed and travelled all night, when they came near Jericho they found the Inhabitants fully appriſed of their danger, on the watch, and all in arms; it was with great difficulty they could conceal themſelves, by promiſes, oaths, ſtatagem, and art, they did luckily eſcape from a window, in the houſe of one Rahab, a harlot, ſituated on the Town-wall; ſhe, at dead of night, had let them down herſelf by means of a ſcarlet cord, and they had fled to the mountains; the two men got back the third day, told of the amazing riſks they had run, and they begun with the whole hiſtory of their reception, by Rahab, as ſoon as ſhe knew who they were, at the hazard of her life, ſhe was reſolved to protect them, and her whole plot and contri-

vance

vance is wonderfully artful; ſhe whiſpered to them, I know the Lord has given you the Land, the Town is in an uproar, all the People frighted and fainting; we were told of your croſſing the Sea, and your ſlaughter of the Amorites; but what a danger ye yourſelves are in; ſo ſhe led them up to the roof of her houſe, a place where ſhe dried her flax, and covered them all over with the ſtalks: the rumour ſoon ſpread, two men had croſſed over Jordan, they were already in the City, now at Rahab's houſe; the King inſtantly ſent to ſeize them; Rahab ſaid, indeed two men had been there, they were gone, juſt at duſk before the ſhutting of the gates both went away; ſend quickly, you will ſoon overtake them. The King diſpatched his Guard in haſte, and faſtened up his gates. Rahab now went up to the two men with her ſtory, and made with them a league for her family; ſhe had neither huſband nor child, but ſhe had father and mother, and ſiſters and brothers; and ſhe ſays:

"Swear to me when you take poſſeſſion of the "City, ye will ſave my kindred alive, and all that "I have, give me now a token; and the men ſaid:

"Our life for yours; we give ours in ſecurity "for yours."

Rahab

Rahab giving them food, let them down herſelf by a ſcarlet cord from the window, on the outſide of the Town-wall, and ſhe ſaid:

" Haſte ye to the mountain, hide yourſelves till the purſuers are returned, then get ye home."

The men now told her:

" When you draw up the ſcarlet cord, tie it " acroſs and acroſs your window, that we may " be certain of knowing your houſe."

Rahab joyfully obeyed, delighted to have always in her eye the pledge of her ſafety and deliverance. The two men had dwelt much on the terror, alarm, and conſternation of King and People, high and low; this intelligence Joſhua took up, this he ſaid was greatly in their favour, a ſure omen of their future ſucceſs, God had ſtruck all their enemies with terror, and Joſhua in the higheſt ſpirits emboldens and encourages them all:

" Fight ye valiantly under my banner, and the " protection of God."

Joſhua inſtantly blew the Trumpets for War throughout all the Camp: He informed them in three days time they ſhould all paſs over Jordan,

Jordan, and he commanded them to lay in a ſtore of Proviſions, and be all in readineſs to march; the uſual Food of the Iſraelites was Manna, on their approach to the Promiſed Land that Food decreaſed, and ſuch as their new Conqueſts afforded, Joſhua ordered them now to collect, as the Manna was totally to ceaſe as ſoon as ever they ſet foot on the oppoſite Shore, and this it actually did.

To inſpire his Army with reverential awe and ſtill greater regard to this very extraordinary expedition, Joſhua commanded all his People to ſanctify themſelves as on public, national, and very ſolemn occaſions: He then directed each Tribe to chuſe out, and depute to him a truſty Man, to hold himſelf in readineſs to execute ſuch orders as ſhould be given him on the morrow.

On Friday the thirtieth of April, in the year of the World, 2554 the Prieſts in their proper Dreſſes and Habits, bearing the Ark, began their march towards the banks of the River, Joſhua divided his People into two Columns, ordering them to ſtand in readineſs to follow, the one was, after they came to the Water edge to proceed before the Ark, and the

reſt

reſt were directed to follow it: As ſoon as the Prieſts bearing the Ark had with their feet touched the Water on the Bank, the Waters to the right hand and to the left receded, and roſe up in heaps like Walls opening a paſſage of no leſs than ſixteen miles in breadth to the Iſraelites, till they were all paſſed over: God thus miraculouſly ſignalizing their new Commander, in the manner he had ſignalized Moſes in paſſing through the Red Sea: In the midſt of the River, the Prieſt bearing the Ark ſtood ſtill, and they there halted till all the Tribes had ſet foot on the oppoſite Coaſt, waiting there the orders of Joſhua to join the reſt of the Camp: The twelve Men one of which had been deputed by each Tribe, were now ſummoned before Joſhua, and He directed them to bring to him twelve very large Stones, one for each Tribe, and fix them up in one huge heap, on the ſpot where the Ark had ſtopped, and they were to place them ſo high, that when the ſwell of the Waters ſhould be abated, they might there be ſeen; and from the bottom of the River, he commanded them to chuſe out twelve more large Stones, and to build with them a Monument on the Shore, in order to perpetuate the Memory of ſo miraculous and very wonderful a Paſ-

ſage

ſage over this immenſely wide and rapid Stream: Joſhua after this ordered the Prieſts to move forwards and depoſite the Ark on the Shore: It was immediately on their ſetting it down, that the Waters reſumed their uſual courſe and channel.

Joſhua impreſſed by the goodneſs of God, in this glorious diſplay of his Power, ſo ſignally honouring him on this his firſt entrance into Canaan, led on his Valiant Troops thus highly inſpirited to the plains of Jericho, and He pitched his Camp about three or four miles only, from the City.

God was here pleaſed to manifeſt Himſelf to Joſhua in a very extraordinary manner, by an Angel on the plain: The Angel aſſumed the figure of a Warrior, and he held a drawn Sword in his hand: Joſhua was alone, reconnoitring the City; at a ſight ſo unexpected, Joſhua ſtarted back; as ſoon as He could collect himſelf, Joſhua reſpectfully enquired if he was for Iſrael, and the Angel anſwered—I am Captain of the Lord's Hoſt. Joſhua fell on his face and worſhipped—after which He humbly aſked, what orders He had for his Servant: the Angel informed Joſhua, His preſence had conſecrated the place—looſe now thy Shoe from off thy foot, the ſpot thou

ſtandeſt on, is holy: Joſhua inſtantly obeyed, and he was now made acquainted with the moſt wonderful ſiege, and ſurrender of Jericho, by which God was pleaſed moſt evidently to ſhew the Canaanites, it was not an Arm of fleſh that fought againſt them.

Joſhua was the General who conquered the Amalekites, and by a ſignal and very famous Victory, opened a paſſage for the Iſraelites, to Mount Sinai; it was a few days before his death Moſes had confirmed him his Succeſſor, to the excluſion of his own children and family, laid his hands upon him in the preſence of the Elders and People purpoſely convened, preſented him himſelf to the High Prieſt for ſolemn conſecration, and proclaimed him throughout all the Tribes, Head, Leader and Chief over Iſrael: With his numerous hoſt, Joſhua had now encountered his firſt difficulty, croſſed this wide and rapid River, entered Canaan, and the populous City of Jericho, the firſt to the Weſtward over Jordan was miraculouſly delivered into his hands, for its ſtrong walls and all its fortifications, ramparts and towers fell down while Joſhua and his Army were ſurrounding it. The City of Jericho was burnt to the ground, and its numerous Inhabitants all put to the Sword; but Rahab was remembered, and

Joſhua

Joſhua called to him the two men, whom ſhe at the hazard of her life had protected; and He ſaid:

" Go ye and bring out thence, the woman, and " all that ſhe hath as ye ſware unto her:"

And the two men led her out, and her father and mother, and all her kindred, and placed them by themſelves without the Camp, and there they ſtayed, and were all cleanſed, and became Proſelytes and Jewiſh converts: They were ſo particular, that they left Rahab's Houſe ſtanding, and the part of the wall on which it was built; thus ſignally recognizing the promiſe and the performance. Rahab was afterwards more diſtinguiſhingly rewarded, ſhe became the wife of Naaſſon, an illuſtrious Prince and Chief of all his Tribe, and ſhone a virtuous Character and a Jewiſh Princeſs.

After the Conqueſt of Jericho, this ſignal and miraculous diſplay of Almighty Power, affording Joſhua and the Iſraelites the moſt animating encouragement, and a footing in the Country; Joſhua purſued his Victories, conquered many other Cities and Kingdoms, took poſſeſſion of the Land, and as the Tribes of Reuben and Gad, and one half of the Tribe of Manaſſeh were already provided for on the other ſide Jordan;

Joſhua divided thoſe on this ſide among the ten Tribes, and the remaining half Tribe of Manaſſeh, by lot.

The progreſs He made in ſubduing the Canaanites, his aſtoniſhing Succeſſes are here minutely related with many artful pieces of generalſhip, which exhibit much Skill, Military proweſs, and the moſt undaunted Courage and Intrepidity: The Inhabitants of Canaan had filled up the meaſure of their Iniquity, were moſt abominably wicked, and God choſe to puniſh them by an utter deſtruction. Such were the ſtanding orders of the Iſraelites, highly awful and peremptory. The Diſgrace and public execution of the Kings (for every City had its King) was intended by Joſhua, to ſtrike a Terror in the Nations around, who ſeeing ſuch ſpirit and bravery accompanied with firmneſs and awful ſeverity, might be inclined to make leſs reſiſtance, and be more eaſily ſubdued: Joſhua therefore ſat in Judgment himſelf, upon the Kings, and he aſſembled his Captains and Men of War and He ſaid:

"Put ye your feet upon the necks of theſe "Kings, thus will God ſubdue your Enemies, "thus tread them under your feet, fear not ye, "nor be ye diſmayed, be ſtrong, and of good "courage:"

Af-

After this ſpirited Addreſs, Joſhua ſmote the Kings, and ſlew them, and hung up their bodies from morning to night, as a brand of infamy, and objects of terror.

The People were more and more attached to Joſhua, and He became more and more dreaded by the Canaanites: to avoid his Victorious Arms, they fled from their Cities, ſome into Aſia, others into Africa, and facilitated the Conqueſt of the Country: Much was completed in leſs than ſeven years, and the diviſion made amongſt the Tribes by lot; the Territories of Timnath-ſerah, on the mountain of Ephraim, were unanimouſly allotted to Joſhua, by the voice of all the People; there he built a City, made it his chief place of Reſidence and where he kept his Court.

Six Cities of Refuge were alſo choſen from out of the forty-two, which had been ſettled on the Tribe of Levi; they were to protect the Innocent in caſes of involuntary homicide only, for the wilful Murderer was to be torn even from the horns of the Altar, and inſtantly put to death.

After Joſhua had ſettled himſelf in peace, and eſtabliſhed Regularity and good Government, Civil and Religious; He here himſelf records the many glorious Victories he had obtained, and by becoming

becoming his own Hiſtorian, fought his battles over again, and took a review of his many wonderful Exploits, and the Safety and protection God had unweariedly afforded him. He then goes on relating ſome very miraculous interpoſitions wherewith God had ſignally favoured him; among many others, one was a very wonderful prolongation of day-light aſtoniſhingly advantageous, and tending glorioufly to his Succeſs, when the Sun and the Moon ſtood ſtill at the voice of the Leader of Iſarel.

The tutelary Deities of the Canaanites, whom they worſhiped, were the Sun and Moon; the former they called Baal or Moloch; and the latter Aſhtoreth; they muſt therefore have been convinced in a moſt ſtriking manner, and in their own way, that the Gods in whom they truſted, were ſubject to, and under the immediate controul of the God of Iſrael: To impreſs the ſtronger on their minds the Majeſty and Power of Jehoyah, Joſhua ſpake in preſence of both Armies, and in ſight of all Iſraeſ, and He ſaid:

" Sun, ſtand thou ſtill upon Gibeon, and thou " Moon in the valley of Ajalon." And the Moon ſtayed and the Sun ſtood ſtill a whole day, and haſted not to go down. In the ancient Chineſe records ſome notice is taken of the

the Sun and Moon being ſtayed a whole day by Joſhua.

Another famous Miracle ſtands here recorded; a fall of large hailſtones during an engagement, deſtructive only to the Enemy, and many more are ſaid to have died by them than by the ſword.

After his ſettlement and diviſion of the Land amongſt the twelve Tribes, Joſhua maintained his Government ſeventeen years, and he had been Elected and Proclaimed four and twenty; finding his life drawing near a cloſe, He aſſembled all the Tribes individually, together with all their Heads, Elders and Magiſtrates, on the ſpacious Plains of Sechem, near the ſpot where they had depoſited the bones of Joſeph, which they had brought with them out of Egypt; and here, in an animated and encouraging, yet moſt pathetic Speech Joſhua addreſſed his People, minutely and diſtinctly He recognized the many wonders God had wrought for Iſrael, and their miraculous Deliverances; inſpiring them with Courage to finiſh what he had ſucceſsfully begun, to drive out the Canaanites and poſſeſs the Land, kindly cautioning them,

" See ye that ye mention not even the name
" of their Gods, cleave ye to the Lord, He it is
" who

" who fighteth for Iſrael, the Lord your God:
" Who among all the Nations hath been able to
" ſtand before you? One man of you ſhall
" chaſe a thouſand; only take heed that ye love
" the Lord your God, and keep his Statutes:
" enter into no alliances with the Nations around
" you, they will prove ſnares and traps to you,
" ſcourges in your ſide, and thorns in your eyes,
" and ye will ſurely periſh from off this good
" Land flowing with milk and honey, eaſe and
" plenty and ſweetneſs, and wander again (ye
" known not whither) in deſerts and the Wilder-
" neſs expoſed to dangers, wearineſs, and want."

The howling Wilderneſs inſtantly brought back to their minds their long, tedious and miſerable journey, upon which this wiſe Prince, winningly enforces his Speech with the pathetic, artfully inſinuating and full of conviction.

" Behold, this day I am going the way of all
" the Earth, now therefore I pray you fear the
" Lord, ſerve him in ſincerity and truth: But if
" it ſeem evil unto you, chuſe ye this day whom
" ye will ſerve; as for me, (firm and reſolute)
" and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord."

And they all ſaid unto Joſhua:

" Nay,

" Nay, but we will ſerve the Lord." Upon this Joſhua (who knew his People better than they knew themſelves) moſt earneſtly exhorted them, one and all, to ſet about renewing their covenant with God, and by the moſt ſolemn oath, made, as was uſual, at the door of the Tabernacle at Shiloh, (the place where the Ark was depoſited) the People individually did confirm it, and then all of them returning back to their tents on the plain, Joſhua in preſence of the whole Hoſt, cauſed a Pillar to be erected to perpetuate the memory of this their ſolemn oath and public ratification.

It was very ſoon after, at his Palace in Timnath-Serah, in the hundred and tenth year of his age Joſhua died, and they buried him in his own inheritance, on the north ſide of the hill of Gaaſh, within the Tribe, and on the Mount of Ephraim; beſide his body, and within his coffin they put the knives of flint with which he circumciſed Iſrael at Gilgal, when God expreſsly told him:

" Hereby you have rolled away the reproach " of Egypt:"

A tranſaction which ever afterwards gave a name to the city—Gilgal or Rolling

The Book of Joſhua records the Hiſtory of thirty-five years, from the year of the World 2553, to 2588, and muſt have been a moſt valuable poſſeſſion to the Iſraelites, as it contained the earlieſt and moſt authentic records of the extent, boundaries, and property of every individual Tribe; a Title-deed of each of their reſpective inheritances, and the Iſraelites were ſo fully ſatisfied with this diſtribution and diviſion made to the twelve Tribes, that for many ages, no one Tribe ever encroached on the limits of its neighbour.

Although Moſes and his Servant ſtrike you with very different features of Character, the one as a divine Lawgiver uniting fortitude with meekneſs, and the other a Hero and his General, yet in ſome reſpects they bear a reſemblance to one another. Both were filled with wiſdom and prudence:

" As I was with Moſes, ſo will I be with " thee."

They both received their appointment from God; were both of them diſtinguiſhed by ſimilar manifeſtations of His power;

" The Sea ſaw it and fled, and Jordan was " driven

" driven back. What aileth thee O Sea! that
" thou fleddeſt, and thou Jordan that thou waſt
" driven back."

A Divinity in high and exalted Majeſty held converſe with both; with Moſes alone in the deſert, and with Joſhua alone on the plains of Jericho, both ſtood on holy ground, and both were commanded in token of reverence to ſtand barefoot; in patriotic zeal and love of their People, in piety, integrity and diſintereſtedneſs, both ſhone alike conſpicuous through life, and at its peaceful cloſe how divinely pathetic are both their addreſſes to Iſrael, a ſolemn farewell ſounding in their ears for ever.

Joſhua's valour and warlike proweſs ſo wonderfully ſuited to his duties and employment characterize the General: In manly courage and martial honours, Joſhua holds a high pre-eminence, and in diſtant Colonies there are monuments now ſtanding, which recognize his Valour, ſtill recording;

" Hither have we fled from the exterminating
" Sword of Joſhua."

ESSAY VI.

ON THE BOOKS OF

JUDGES

AND

RUTH.

JUDGES.

AFTER the death of Joſhua, the Iſraelites had no proper Ruler or civil authority among them for ſome years, the government devolved on the High-Prieſt and the Elders, and in caſes of difficulty the Sanhedrim or Grand Council were ſummoned. Each Tribe was governed by its own Magiſtrates, and in the war department elected its own General and Commander. A great

great part of the country was yet unſubdued, and many conflicts, much ſervitude and perſecution the Iſraelites endured from the Natives and neighbouring Nations, who were yet contending for poſſeſſion.

God was pleaſed from time to time, (as their exigencies required,) to raiſe up high and eminent Characters among them, and call them forth as Champions and Deliverers of Iſrael, in acknowledgement and gratitude, the Elders and People inveſted them with the ſupreme authority, aſſigning over to them the government under the title of Judge.

Theſe Judges were extraordinary Magiſtrates, whoſe office was to preſide in the Senate; protect the ſtate; pronounce the law; and regulate divine worſhip. They were to govern by the laws of God and in doubtful caſes by his ſpirit, with which they were endowed; they differed in nothing from Kings but in Title, pomp, and grandeur, and in their honours not being hereditary; they made peace and war; they ſummoned the tribes to arms; in caſes of danger and difficulty, by means of the High-Prieſt, they were directed to apply for inſtruction from God.

The

The People all reſorted to them for judgment, and annually they made a circuit throughout the land to adminiſter Juſtice and preſerve order and ſubordination.

Under the title of Judge fourteen different perſons preſided over the Iſraelites, and they were thus governed two hundred and fifty years, not including in them many years of ſervitude and bondage (during all which they were only governed by their Elders and Council) under the King of Meſopotamia, Moab, the Canaanites, Midian, the Amorites and Philiſtines.

At the death of Joſhua, all Iſrael aſſembled at Shiloh, (the place where the ark was depoſited) and as the Canaanites and neighbouring Kingdoms were plundering, and making daily inroads into their territories, they there inquired through the High-Prieſt what tribe ſhould go up and oppoſe them: God was pleaſed to give them an immediate and explicit anſwer, "Judah ſhall go up."

The tribe of Simeon were their brothers and neareſt neighbours, and Judah aſked their aſſiſtance in this their firſt expedition, Simeon readily joined them: uniting their forces, theſe two Tribes marched them againſt the Canaanites and Perizzites: Adoni-Bezek the King met them in perſon

a bloody

a bloody battle was fought, and the Iſraelites ſlew ten thouſand. Adoni-Bezek made his eſcape from the field, and haſtily fled to the City of Bezek, He was there purſued, and taken alive: The Iſraelites ſpared his life, but to diſable him from fighting or running away they cut off his two thumbs and his great toes, a puniſhment not unuſual among the Princes of the Eaſt, for the King acknowledged the juſtice of the ſentence, and He ſaid, " threeſcore and ten Kings with their " thumbs and great toes cut off gathered their " meat under my table, as I have done to them, ſo " God hath requited me:" The Iſraelites led Adoni-Bezek in triumph to Jeruſalem, they looked upon his capture as a proof of God's favour and his righteous vengeance, and the King lived here a State-priſoner untill he died.

At this time the Chief in the Tribe of Judah was Caleb, a warlike Commander, who had exhibited many feats of valour, and ſhewn his faithfulneſs in being the only one, who accorded with Joſhua in the report he had made of the land of Canaan: Caleb had made himſelf the Conqueſt of Jeruſalem, and burned the whole City to the ground; enamoured with glory himſelf, he loved it in others: But Caleb was now far advanced in years, at the age of eighty-five, and as there were

many

many other populous, large and well fortified Cities yet to conquer, he thought it prudent not to exhauſt his own ſtrength in tedious regular ſieges and laborious enterprizes, he therefore blew the trumpets, iſſued out a proclamation inſpiring the youthful Hero with gallantry, and he makes an offer of the moſt precious prize in his poſſeſſion, Achſah his beautiful daughter and a rich heireſs, Caleb propoſed her a reward in marriage to the brave ſoldier who ſhould make himſelf maſter, and maintain poſſeſſion of the firſt City. Such a propoſal fired the boſom and animated the exertions of Othniel, ſon of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, a ſpirited youth of conſummate valour, who with his own hands had ſlain Chuſhan-Riſhathaim King of Meſopotamia. The gallant Othniel took by ſtorm Kirjath-Sepher, called the City of books, and ſuppoſed a Univerſity, it was inhabited by a gigantic race called Anakims and ſtood near Hebron. This intrepid Youth mounted the firſt breach, and made himſelf maſter of the City and claimed the rich prize of his Commander.

The dignity and title of Judge was firſt conferred on Othniel, he was inveſted with the autho-

rity

rity and exerciſed it with virtue and honour, devoted to God and to the good of his People, Othniel reſcued his country from oppreſſion, prevented all future inroads, and the land had reſt, and peace and in proſperity forty years.

After the death of Othniel, Eglon King of Moab invaded Iſrael and made them tributary, the Iſraelites remained under bondage to Moab eighteen years, at which time they were delivered by Ehud a Benjamite, a valiant and reſolute man, lame of his right hand, a perſon well known to Eglon the Moabitiſh Monarch. Eglon had removed with all his court to Jericho, the City of Palm Trees, invited by the beauty and fruitfulneſs of the country, here Ehud obtained an audience and was admitted to the Kings preſence, while he was talking to him in his ſummer parlour and paying him the annual tribute money, he told Eglon, "I have a meſſage for thee O King from God," upon this every body withdrew, and as ſoon as they two were left alone, the King roſe from his ſeat to hear the meſſage. Ehud inſtantly ſtabbed him in the belly with ſuch violence the haft of the dagger went in after the blade, Ehud was obliged to leave it in the body, and then ſoftly letting himſelf out, he locked faſt the door and carried off the key. The ſervants liſtning from time to time ſuppoſed the King might be

a-ſleep, in the mean time Ehud had haſtily fled back to his brethren at Seirah, and told all he had done. The Iſraelites blew up the trumpets for war, aſſembled all their forces, fell furiouſly on the Moabites under their confuſion and ſudden alarm, and put them all to the ſword. On this ſucceſsful enterprize Ehud's bravery was rewarded by the People and they unanimouſly advanced him to the dignity of Judge.

Ehud, ſecond Judge of Iſrael, procured for them a reſcue from their bondage to Moab and a peace of eighty years.

On the Iſraelites return to their impiety and and idolatry after the death of Ehud, God permitted them to fall an eaſy prey to their Philiſtine neighbours. The valiant Shamgar now reſcued them from ſlavery aſſumed the title and became their third Judge. This intrepid Hero, with his own hands ſlew ſix hundred Philiſtines with a plough-ſhare he had picked up upon the road, and by ſo glorious a Feat completely drove them out, and delivered his country from the Philiſtine yoke, but Shamgar died in the firſt year of his dignity.

Notwithſtanding Iſrael had experienced ſo aſto-

niſhing

niſhing an interpoſition, and ſo very ſpirited a reſcue, they very ſoon became Idolaters, made alliances and held intercourſe with the Nations around them which God had expreſsly forbid, and a more formidable Adverſary was now permitted to enſlave them. Jabin King of Canaan with a numerous Army and chariots of iron. Jabin held Iſrael under bondage and ſubjection twenty years, they were at length delivered from their heavy oppreſſion by two Women. Deborah the Propheteſs concerted the plan, Jael wife of Hebar completed it. Barak was Commander in Chief to Deborah and he at the head of ten thouſand men defeated Siſera, the Canaanitiſh General, and his numerous Hoſt ſtrengthned with nine hundred chariots of iron. Siſera fled for his life, he left his chariot, ran on foot to the valley of Zaænaim, and hid himſelf in the tent of Jael, faint and dying with fatigue, totally exhauſted, Siſera begged of her a draught of water, and Jael brought him a bottle of milk, Siſera ſwooned and fell into a ſleep, Jael availed herſelf of the moment, ſtruck a nail into his temple, and he was inſtantly dead. Barak purſued his victory, marched his ſpirited troops to the City of Hazor where Jabin kept his court, took the City, entered it in triumph and put all the inhabitants to the ſword.

Iſrael now reſumed its fertility and ſplendour under Deborah the Propheteſs, who was inveſted with the ſupreme authority and proclaimed fourth Judge of Iſrael. On this glorious victory and ſignal deliverance, ſhe compoſed a beautiful and triumphant ode, brilliant with lively figures, with ſudden, quick and elegant tranſitions, and high ſublimity: full of the ideas of her triumph, and tranſported with her victory, Deborah addreſſes her ſoul in a moſt beautiful exclamation; the exploit of Jael here lives for ever, a noble effort of courage and conduct; the fondneſs of the Mother of Siſera, her impatience, her inquiries, her anſwers, her workings of ſuſpence, her hopes and fears are all highly pictureſque. The Ode was deſigned to be ſung in parts, and the laſt verſe in chorus, to impreſs the ſtronger on the mind, the ideas of Omnipotence, the ardours of patriotic Zeal, and the overflowings of gratitude.

Under Deborah the land had reſt forty years, but after her death Iſrael ſoon revolted, was again in bondage and ſorely harraſſed by the Midianites, they enſlaved them ſeven years more, the Iſraelites now could only find ſhelter and ſafety among their ſtrong Holds, the clefts and caverns

of the rocks, where-ever they had planted and ſowed their enemies gathered and reaped and poſſeſſed themſelves of their crops, and of all the fruits of their labour.

God now kindly ſent a Prophet to convince and reclaim his people, to repreſent to them the baſeneſs of their ingratitude and idolatry, the evident ſources of all their thraldom and ſufferings. Ater He had thus admoniſhed and condeſcendingly reaſoned with Iſrael; God made choice of Gideon and called him forth as their champion and Deliverer.

In the ſimplicity and from the neceſſity of the times, to preſerve his little ſtock of corn, Gideon was threſhing it himſelf. On the threſhing floor when he was privately ſhut up, an Angel appeared, and he ſaluted Gideon by the honourable title of the Saviour of Iſrael: the Angel then told him, his wiſhed-for freedom God was now about to give. Gideon, an experienced warrior, dejected and groaning under the ſufferings of his country, ſays, "O my Lord, if the Lord be with us why has all this befallen us, are we not in the hand of Midian? the Angel with a placid countenance betokening comfort, looked ſteadily on Gideon and He ſaid;

"Go

" Go in this my might—thou ſhalt ſave Iſrael —have not I ſent thee? Gideon ſtill miſtruſting, humbly replied, " O my Lord wherewith? my family is the meaneſt in Manaſſeh, and I the leaſt in my Fathers houſe." The Angel now tells him, as eaſily ſhalt thou deſtroy the Hoſt of Midian, as if they were One man, and by various miracles condeſcendingly and repeatedly performed, the Angel convinced Gideon, God had heard the cry of his People, their long wiſhed-for freedom was indeed at hand.

On that very night God commanded Gideon to go himſelf and deſtroy the Altar and cut down the Grove of Baal, the ſad ſource of Iſraels Idolatry, and afterwards with only a handful of men Gideon gained a complete victory over all the combined Armies of their oppreſſors, and Iſrael was laden with the ſpoil.

The night before this total overthrow of Midian the Angel appeared again at the camp of Iſrael and he ſaid to Gideon, if thou yet fear to go down behold I will give thee one proof more. Take Phurah thy ſervant and go down with him alone to the enemies camp, and Gideon went down, and the Midianites, Amalekites and their allies lay all along in the valley like graſhoppers for multitude and their Camels were without number, as ſand on

the

the ſea ſhore. Gideon liſtened to a man telling his dream—a cake of barley (ſays he) tumbled into the Hoſt and fell upon a tent, and overturned it, and the Tent lay all along—his fellow anſwered, tis ſurely the ſword of Gideon, God hath delivered us into their hands: Gideon delighted at his heart, fell down and worſhipped. He returned to the camp of Iſrael, ariſe, ariſe, God hath delivered into your hands the Hoſt of Midian; highly fanciful and entertaining is Gideons onſet, with only three hundred men with flaming torches at firſt concealed in pitchers, and they all blew aloud their trumpets (that they might be thought a mighty Hoſt and theſe only their harbingers and torch-bearers) and at the dead of night they ruſhed into the enemies camp, crying out aloud,

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon."

In the utmoſt terror they fell fighting with one another, every mans ſword againſt his fellow, thus furious and frantic they ran and fled; Oreb and Zeeb two illuſtrious Princes they ſlew as they were purſuing Midian, and they brought both their heads and preſented them to Gideon.

"Gideon returned from Battle before the Sun "was up,

All

All Iſrael now aſſembled, and inveſted Gideon, with the Supreme Authority under the title of fifth Judge over Iſrael.

Gideon accepted the Honours, but he aſſured them their ſecurity would alone depend on their Divine Protector.

Gideon maintained his Dignity forty years during all which time no enemy moleſted them. He died in a good old age and left Iſrael in proſperity and at peace.

In a very ſhort time the ſervices of this experienced General and good Judge were ſoon forgot, the Iſraelites again became Idolaters, they worſhipped Baalim aad the hoſt of Heaven, with the baſeſt ingratitude they repaid the Piety, Valour and good government of their Judge.

Abimeleck ſucceeded to the Dignity, was inveſted with the ſupreme Authority, and moſt ſadly He diſgraced it. Abimeleck was a natural ſon by a concubine, highly artful, of a cruel baſe and intriguing diſpoſition. He uſurped his Fathers government, and the very firſt exerciſe of his authority was to deſtroy almoſt all his Fathers family, out of ſeventy Sons of Gideon, ſixty nine brothers

were ſlain, Jotham was the youngeſt of them all, this young Prince only eſcaped, and after his wiſe, ſevere and ever memorable ſpeech he fled away to Beer, a City on the northern frontiers in the tribe of Judah, but one which had not acknowledged the authority of Abimeleck and would not ſware allegiance.

The ſpeech of this ſpirited youth, ſo harraſſed and diſappointed, wiſely repreſents the Vanity of baſe men in power, and while it upbraids the folly and weakneſs of his Countrymen, it foreſhews their ruin; in very forcible language it tells them, that worthleſs men are the fondeſt of Power, the wiſe and good decline rule, and give the firſt preference to native eaſe and freedom; The vanity of men of the former Character is elegantly deſcribed, and made ſtrikingly ridiculous:

" And the Bramble ſaid if in truth ye annoint
" me King, come and put your truſt in my
" ſhadow, and if not, let fire come out of
" the Bramble and devour the Cedars of Le-
" banon:

The fire of the Bramble, (ſo ſhort and momentary in the Eaſtern Countries,) was to burn up the tall Cedars, his new ſubjects, unleſs they

would all come under his ſhade, and put their truſt in him.

A City of Judah, named Thebez, revolted from his Government; Abimeleck marched with his Army, encamped before it and laid cloſe Siege, but while he was ſtorming the Garriſon, a Woman rolled down a huge ſtone from a Tower, and ſtruck him on the head; Abimeleck unwilling to die by the hands of a woman, commanded his Armour-bearer to diſpatch him, and he was inſtantly obeyed.

Abimeleck was the only one who uſurped and diſgraced the Title and the Dignity, and He held the Government about three years.

Tolar the ſon of Puah and grandſon of Dodo, an illuſtrious family of the Tribe of Iſſachar ſucceeded Abimeleck, a much more amiable and worthy Character. Tolar Judged Iſrael three and twenty years, He kept his Court at Shamir on Mount Ephraim where Tolar died, and they buried him in the City of Shamir; during the life-time of this Judge, we do not read of any enemies oppreſſing the Iſraelites.

Jair the Gileadite, a wealthy man of that

part of the Tribe of Manaſſeh, which dwelt on the other ſide Jordan, was next inveſted with the Government, after the death of Tolar. Jair poſſeſſed a very large Territory in the land of Gilead, in which were no leſs than thirty Cities and the tract of Country went by the name of the Hamlets of Jair. This Judge had thirty Sons, to each of which he allotted one of his Cities; and in order to ſhew their high ſtile of Life, pre-eminence, and grandeur, the Text adds:

" Each of the Sons of Jair rode on an Aſſe's " Colt,"

A diſtinguiſhed Honour in thoſe days.

Jair judged Iſrael two and twenty years; He then died and was buried in the City of Camon.

The ingratitude and Idolatry of the Iſraelites renewed their troubles ſoon after the death of this laſt Judge, and they were again in bondage and ſore oppreſſed by the Philiſtines and Ammon eighteen years. They had been expreſsly and repeatedly forbid to make any Alliance, league, or covenant with their idolatrous neighbours; notwithſtanding which, the Inhabitants of the Towns and Cities they had taken, were only made tributary; they held intercourſe with them

and thus violated the inſtructions and expreſs commands given them, and now ſuffered ſorely for diſobedience. This was their Fifth Thraldom ſince the death of Joſhua. To ſtop the rapid progreſs and ſlaughter of Ammon, who with their formidable Armies had already paſſed over Jordan in order to meet the united forces of Judah and Benjamin, and thoſe of the Houſe of Ephraim. The Iſraelites, terrified and alarmed, aſſembled themſelves at Mizpeh, their place of worſhip, and they here fell on their faces, and moſt devoutly addreſſed themſelves to God:

" O God we have ſinned, we have ſinned, " we have forſaken thee our God, and ſerved " Baal.

God was angry with Iſrael, and moſt pathetically He threatens, reproves, and condeſcends to reaſon with them:

" Go and cry to the Gods, ye have choſen, let them deliver you in time of trouble."

Iſrael cried out the more, we have ſinned, we have ſinned; and they put away their ſtrange Gods, and again and again right earneſtly cried to God, and He heared their cry and compaſſionated the ſorrows of his People.

On account of their obſtinacy and Idolatry God had not favoured them now, as on former occaſions, by electing them a Judge, under their very preſſing grievances and neceſſities, the Iſraelites with the enemy at their gates were compelled to look out for a General, and they ſent an invitation to a man of mighty valour, Jephthah the Gileadite, and they offered him the Command of all the Forces, and the Supreme Authority and Dignity of Judge. Jephthah was at that time Captain and Chief of a Banditti, principally Aliens and Fugitives, diſtinguiſhed for their courage and valour; Jephthah received their meſſage with diſtruſt, and refuſed all their offers, until they had confirmed to him the Supreme Authority by ſolemn Oath, and ſwore Allegiance. Jephthah then came forward, and put himſelf at their Head. He diſpatched a flag of Truce to Ammon. The Ammonites treated his propoſals with ſovereign diſdain. Ammon was bent on Conqneſt. The Spirit of the Lord is now ſaid to have come on Jephthah, and he paſſed with his Army over Gilead and Manaſſeh, and over Mizpeh, and from Mizpeh-Gilead he paſſed over to Ammon. Jephthah had levied a vaſt Army, commanded them himſelf, and encamped in full front of the Enemy. Intimidated and alarmed Jephthah in ſuperſtitious fear

fear vowed a ſolemn vow, juſt at the moment of engaging: if God would bleſs him and make him victorious, the firſt living thing he ſhould meet coming out of his houſe on his return home, he would devoutly offer up in ſacrifice. The Ammonites were totally routed, and Iſrael was laden with their ſpoils, but his Daughter, a virgin exquiſitely beautiful, and his only child, proved the unhappy victim of the Fathers raſh and inconſiderate vow. The highly welcome news of the victory had reached her ears, to grace her Fathers triumph, in joy aud extacy ſhe ran out, headed a company of maidens elegantly attired, and with timbrells and dances, expreſſive of dutiful reſpect and filial joy; while they were thus tranſported and employed, ſhe proved the innocent but unhappy object, on which Jephthah caſt his eyes, and thereby doomed his Daughter to deſtruction.

Jephthah rent his cloaths, and with the livelieſt expreſſions of ſorrow, he diſcloſed his raſhneſs and the fatal ſecret;

"Alas, alas my Daughter, thou haſt brought "me very low—thou art one of them that trou-"bleth me. I have opened my mouth to the "Lord and cannot go back."

His

His amiable Daughter heard it patiently, and with a firm compoſure dutifully and affectionately replied—

" O my Father ſince the Lord has taken venge-
" ance on thine enemies, even on Ammon, do
" unto me according to all thou haſt vowed."

His daughter only requeſted a reſpite of two months to retire in ſolitude to the mountains, together with her maidens and there bewail her virginity, at the expiration of that time ſhe punctually returned to her Father.

Jephthah's conduct ſtrongly exhibits the religious reverence with which an oath was then reſpected, and how he conſidered himſelf as bound to give up every conſideration, rather than violate the ſolemn engagement he had made with God.

It was ever after a cuſtom in Iſrael, that the Daughters of Iſrael, went yearly, four days in a year, to lament for the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite the Iſraelitiſh Judge.

Some have thought that ſhe was offered up as a ſacrifice, but others more probably that his daughter was given to the Lord in perpetuity, as

a devoted

a devoted thing, and ſhe conſents to the vow, not to he ſlain nor to be a burnt offering, but a ſervant of the Tabernacle, an attendant on the High-Prieſt and to die in that ſtate. The Iſraelites greateſt happineſs was in their children, every woman hoped the Meſſiah might be born of her, and hence the great ſorrow, diſgrace and mortification of being childleſs.

Jephthah ruled Iſrael ſix years, He died at that time and was buried in one of the Cities of Gilead.

Ibſan a native of Bethlehem was the tenth Judge of Iſrael. This Prince had ſixty ſons and daughters, and as a numerous iſſue was conſidered a high honour and a peculiar bleſſing of Providence, this Judge was greatly bleſſed. He lived to ſee them all ſettled and married, ſo that Ibſan had an hundred and twenty ſons and daughters, and ſons and daughters in law, beſides grand-children.

Ibſan governed Iſrael ſeven years and was ſucceeded by Elon of the tribe of Zebulun.

Elon judged Iſrael ten years at which time he died and was buried in Aijalon in his own Tribe.

Ibſan Tenth Judge. Elon Eleventh.

Abdon

Abdon ſon of Hillel of the tribe of Ephraim was twelfth Judge of Iſrael, and after poſſeſſing the Dignity eight years, He died and left forty ſons and thirty grandſons, and the Seventy all of them rode on Aſſes Colts, after the manner of the great and wealthy men in Iſrael, for in the ſimplicity of thoſe times, aſſes were eſteemed a very valuable part of their ſubſtance.

Abdon was buried in Pirathon, in the land of Ephraim, on the mount of the Amalekites.

At the time of Abdon's death, Eli, a younger branch of the houſe of Aaron, was High-Prieſt and he ſucceeded to the Dignity of Judge.

Eli was the firſt among the Iſraelites who joined, the Supreme Authority and Title of Judge to the High-Prieſthood. He was a Prince of a very eaſy and moſt indolent diſpoſition, neglectful of his Government and very remiſs in his Family. His two Sons were vicious, haughty, tyranical and ambitious, but Eli never choſe to be at the trouble of reproving them; ſuch weak indulgence proved the ſad ſource both of the Father's ruin and his Sons.

Abdon Twelfth Judge. Eli Thirteenth.

A few months only after Eli had been inveſted with the Government, the Iſraelites again Idolaters were puniſhed for their ingratitude and impiety, and in bondage again to the Philiſtines. This was Iſraels ſixth Thraldom. Inſufferable were their hardſhips and oppreſſion, but the ſad ſeverity proved the means of bringing them back to their duty, and of reclaiming them, moſt earneſtly they addreſſed themſelves in prayer, and God now raiſed up for Iſrael a moſt wonderful Champion and Deliverer. An Angel appeared to his Mother, who was then an old woman and always reputed to have been barren, and afterwards the ſame Angel appeared to Monoah the Father, and foretold the birth of Sampſon to them both. The Angel laid a ſtrict prohibition on the Mother, and it was to extend to the Son. Monoah was of the tribe of Dan and his Fathers name was Zorah. The younger part of Sampſon's life is unnoticed, we hear nothing of him until he ſet out on a journey to Timnah, a city in his own tribe, but now in the hands of the Philiſtines, Sampſon met in his way a young Lion roaring for his prey, and his encounter with him, gave Sampſon a pleaſing proof of his amazing ſtrength, for though unarmed he killed the Lion and flung its carcaſe into a hollow on the road ſide, ſome months after paſſing that

road

road again, a hive of bees had taken poſſeſſion of the carcaſs, and it contained much honey. While at the City of Timnah, Sampſon fell in love with a Philiſtine damſel, and as ſoon as he returned home, he named his attachment to his Parents, and he ſaid,

" I pray you get her me to wife,"

The requeſt ſurpriſed both Father and Mother, and they ſaid,

" Is there no women among the Daughters of " thy Brethren that you chuſe a wife from among " the Philiſtines ?"

Sampſon pleaded his ſtrong attachment, nay Father, this Woman pleaſeth me well, I pray you get her me. The Sons importunity at length prevailed, after ſeveral meetings between the families, Sampſon married her. At the celebration of his Nuptials, after the faſhion of the times, a train of no leſs than thirty young men were aſſembled every day in high feſtivity, and the principal Brideſman was called the Bridegrooms friend, in their jollity and merriment, as a trial of ſagacity, a riddle was propoſed, and it was then a very uſual mode of laying a wager. Each of the company preſent ſhould give Sampſon a ſhirt and a ſuit of

raiment, if they could not unravel his riddle, but in caſe they did, each was to receive the ſame forfeit from the bridegroom.

Sampſon's riddle was,

" Food came from the devourer, and ſweetneſs from that which is eager and ſharp,"

The Bride kept worrying Sampſon night and day for ſeven days and ſeven nights (the time theſe feſtivals laſted) for an explanation, and at length tired to death with her never-ceaſing importunity Sampſon told it his wife, and ſhe terrified to death revealed the ſecret to her Countrymen, who had poſitively declared they would burn her alive and all her Fathers houſe, in caſe ſhe could not get her huſband to unravel his Riddle.

The laſt day of the Feaſt Sampſon aſked for an explanation, and the young men anſwered,

" What is ſtronger than a Lion? what is ſweet-
" er than honey?"

Sampſon told them inſtantly whence they acquired their knowledge, and in order to make good his promiſe and pay his wager, Sampſon ſet out and went to Aſhkelon, a city at ſome diſtance, but not far from Jeruſalem, and He there ſlew thirty of the Philiſtines, and delivered up to the

the thirty young men, the thirty changes of raiment, ſhirts and all.

Some time after availing himſelf of Sampſons abſence from Timnah, his Father-in-law, who paid no regard to principle or honour, diſpoſed again of his daughter, and married her to another man. Sampſon paſſionately furious, ſtudying only his revenge, ſet out and caught a number of young foxes, with which that country was ſorely infeſted, and tying ſeveral of them together by the tails and firebrands flaming between them, he drove three hundred of them among the ſtanding corn juſt now ripe for harveſt, and others he turned into the Vineyards, and Olive grounds, and deſtroyed the produce of their lands. The inhabitants were all in an uproar, and ſuſpecting the Father to be the aggreſſor, they burnt down his houſe to the ground and every thing belonging to him.

Judah was at this time tributary and under the Philiſtine yoke, the Iſraelites dreading the conſequences, were ſore affraid, and ſtood expecting every moment the wrath and vengeance of their Maſters. Sampſon in order to conceal himſelf had gone up to Etam, and climbed a ſteep rock to get out of their reach. The Iſraelites no leſs than three thouſand of them followed him, and there repreſenting their danger, made a league with Sampſon, expoſtulated

expoſtulated with him, and brought him bound hand and foot to a City of the Philiſtines, and led him before the Magiſtrates. The Philiſtines overjoyed ſhouted aloud at the ſight of Sampſon, but he ſnapping his cords aſunder, and ſeeing on the ground the jaw bone of an Aſs, he took it up and ſlew with it one thouſand of the Philiſtines. Thus literally fullfilling a prediction,

" One man of you ſhall chaſe a thouſand."

Not very long after this ſlaughter, as he was walking in the ſtreets of Gaza, the Gazites ſeeing him in their City, ſhut up their gates, ſet a ſtrong guard, ordered a double watch and Sampſon to be ſecured, but Sampſon riſing at midnight unhinged and unbolted the maſſy gates of Gaza, and took poſts and gates and bars and carried them off on his ſhoulders mounting the hill towards Hebron.

By the inſinuating Arts, intrigues, and contrivances of Delilah his miſtreſs, Sampſon was at length worried out of his ſecret and bereaved of his ſtrength, he confeſſed to her truly (but not until he had attempted many evaſions) it was connected with the hair of his head, and while he was confidentially ſleeping in her lap, ſhe with a pair of ſciſſors cut it cloſe off, and accepted of the

the Magiſtrates for her perfidy, a bribe of eleven hundred pieces of Silver.

Upon an Event ſo deſtructive to his ſafety and to all further reſiſtance, Sampſon became an eaſy Capture to his Enemies, and the Magiſtrates inſtantly ordered both his Eyes to be ſtruck out, heavy fetters of braſs to be faſtened on him, and employed him as a Grinder in the Priſon-houſe.

At a grand Jubilee when all their Princes and the Philiſtine Nobility, together with many thouſands were met together on a ſpacious and moſt magnificent Amphitheatre, celebrating a high Feſtival in honour of their Gods, in their Jollity and merriment, they ſent to the Priſon-houſe and ordered forth blind Sampſon, once ſo much their dread, now their ſport and deriſion. His hair was much grown, and with it he found his ſtrength returning. Sampſon ſo contrived as to be led near the center of the building, and underneath it, then fixing himſelf round two of its main Pillars, He pulled this immence pile of building on himſelf and buried their Princes and all their Nobles and many thouſands in its ruins.

So ſpacious is ſaid to have been this amazing Theatre that no leſs than three thouſand were ſtanding on the top of it.

Sampſon's

Sampſon's Brethren and all the houſe of his Father came down and dug his Body from out the ruins, and brought it up and buried it between Zorah and Eſtaol, in the burying place of Manoah his Father.

Sampſon was Judge of Iſrael twenty years with Eli the High-Prieſt, ſharing together with him the Government, and Eli carried it on twenty years more after the Death of this very wonderful Champion. We read with ſurprize the Ingratitude of the Iſraelites, and that they did not ſhake off their ſhameful yoke under this Illuſtrious Danite, but ſtill more that they ſhould bind their Judge and Avenger, and treacherouſly give him up to their Tyrants and Oppreſſors, as if he had been the betrayer and not the Guardian and Deliverer of his Country.

The appearance of an Angel, more than once, to notify the birth of Sampſon, and give directions to his Father and Mother reſpecting him; the Angels aſcent, ſo viſible, in a bright flame of fire; the early proofs of amazing ſtrength; the celebration of Samſon's wedding; his famous Riddle ſo artfully blinded; his aſtoniſhing feats; the bloody ſlaughter of the Philiſtines, and fatal Deſtruction of them at his Death, are all a curious train of Anecdotes very intereſting and wonderful,

ful, and they fell out about the year of the World 2887.

Sampſon proved a ſevere ſcourge and a powerful check to the pride of the Philiſtines, diſtinguiſhed for his patriotiſm, courage and ſtrength of body, and God choſe to annex this laſt to his hair, and make the continuance of the one dependent on the preſervation of the other, being the mark of his conſecration as a Nazarite. We muſt ſeriouſly condemn Sampſon's blind confidence and criminal infatuation, and lament the want of dignity and ſad diſtraction during his Government, and the unprecedented ſlaughter at his death.

Some of the Judges are honourably ſpoken of by the Apoſtle Paul: " The time would fail me to tell of Gideon and of Barak and of Sampſon and of Jephthah, of David alſo and of Samuel, who through Faith ſubdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteouſneſs, obtained Promiſes, ſtopped the Mouth of Lions, waxed Valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of Aliens."

Between the reigns of their Judges the Iſraelites at times utterly abandoned the worſhip of God, lived without Government without Law. Such want of Authority favoured the perpetration of

ſome of the blackeſt, moſt odious and horrible tranſactions, the Idolatry of Micah and ſtrange intercommunity of his Religion, the invaſion of the Danites, diſtreſsful baſe and cruel murders, the enormous crimes of the Iſraelites and the Benjamites in particular, which are here moſt tragically and diſgracefully recorded.

After the death of Sampſon, Eli maintained the Supreme Authority alone, indolent in his Government and remiſs in his Family, his conduct was ſadly defective, but He ſtill maintained the Title of Judge together with the Dignity of the High-Prieſthood twenty years longer, and his People were the whole time tributary and under bondage to the Philiſtines.

At this time the Iſraelites made a ſpirited ſtruggle for their Liberty—a bloody battle was fought, the Ark of God was ran away with by the Philiſtine army. Eli in great diſtreſs ſeated himſelf at the City-gate to hear the earlieſt news of the engagement, it was here told him, the battle was loſt, his two Sons both of them ſlain, and the Ark of God carried off in triumph; on hearing this laſt the good old man was ſtruck dumb, became quite ſenſeleſs, fell from off his ſeat, broke his neck and died inſtantly.

The

The reigns of the Judges together with the intervening years of ſlavery and bondage (during which time they were almoſt without Government,) make up a period of three hundred and ſeventeen years. From the year of the World 2612 to 2929.

The book is thought to have been wrote by Samuel, in Ramoth-Gilead, after he had reſigned up his Government to Saul.

The Iſraelites inveſted their Judges with the Supreme Authority under certain reſtrictions and without the enſigns of royalty. Many of them were elected by the People on the performance of ſome ſignal exploits, and their Government continued for life.

The book is divided into two parts, the firſt (ending at the Sixteenth Chapter) contains an account of the Judges from Othniel to Sampſon—the ſecond part records the hiſtory of ſome occurrences which fell out not long after the death of Joſhua, but they are placed at the end of the book, in order that they might not interrupt the courſe of the hiſtory.

The lives of the two laſt Judges, Eli and Samuel is the ſubject of a ſubſequent book.

The period here recorded muſt have ſtruck you with a ſtrange viciſſitude of unprecedented events, many illuſtrious exploits, glaring and miraculous proofs of Divine Agency conſpicuouſly diſplaying the Juſtice, Mercy, and condeſcention of God. Some mixed characters. and very many actions reprehenſible.

The book furniſhes a lively deſcription of a fluctuating and unſettled Nation, a Republic at times without Magiſtracy, full of danger and diſtraction. Few Prophets inſtructed or controuled them, " the high-ways were un-occupied, the tra-
" vellers walked through bye-ways, and the book
" concludes, in thoſe days there was no King in
" Iſrael, every man did that which was right in his
" own eyes."

After the death of Eli an inter-regnum took place, in which the Iſraelites had no civil Magiſtrate at all for twenty years and ſeven months, at which time, Samuel the Prophet that amiable and highly exalted character took upon himſelf the Government, by his prudence and exertion He reſcued Iſrael from ſlavery and aſſumed the Title of Judge. With aſſiduity and irreproachable integrity, Samuel maintained the Dignity twenty

Samuel Fourteenth Judge.

years

years, at which time the People demanded a King, the Government became Monarchical, and Samuel, without one ſpark of ambition reſigned up his Authority to Saul.

ON THE BOOK OF RUTH.

THE Book of Ruth contains a private and domeſtic Hiſtory of two very amiable Women, and takes its Name from one of them.

The Events probably fell out much earlier, but are here recorded to preſerve the thread of the Hiſtory, between the book of Judges and the firſt book of Samuel, and alſo with more exactneſs and preciſion to aſcertain the Pedigree of the Meſſiah.

Obed the Son of Boaz, was the Father of Jeſſe, the Father of David. The Hiſtory is a beautiful unadorned picture of Nature, affect-

ingly-

ingly told, with many maſterly ſtrokes, highly intereſting and entertaining: A celebrated Poet has ſhewn great judgment, and afforded much pleaſure by the choice of the ſubject, and his very elegant manner of telling the ſtory.

Naomi a Widow in a ſtrange Country, to which ſhe had been driven by a famine in her own, reſolved on her return to Bethlehem, to her native Town and Kindred, and ſhe ſet out on her journey, accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, who now were alſo Widows, and very deſirous of going with her.

Naomi was quite diſtreſſed they ſhould leave all their friends and their Father's houſe, and ſhe pathetically diſſuades and preſſes them to return back, ſtrongly and affectionately pleading the proſpect before them of marrying again, and as they were both young, of ſettling in their own Country; ſuch ſettlement ſhe repreſented much more unlikely to take place in her's, and amongſt any of her kindred there; as to herſelf, they well knew ſhe had no more Sons to give them, nor even a hut however uncheary and forlorn to accommodate them at Bethlehem.

Naomi's importunity at length prevailed with one, the picture of poverty was too dark and deplorable

deplorable for Orpah, and ſhe in a flood of tears hung on her Mother-in-law, took an affecting leave and turned back to Moab. No reaſoning, arguments or remonſtrance, no perſuaſion whatever could prevail with Ruth; with tears and intreaties irreſiſtibly expreſſive, ſhe clung round Naomi—death only ſhould ever part them, the God of Naomi ſhould be the God of Ruth for ever and for ever— "Whither thou goeſt I will go—where thou lodgeſt I will lodge—thy People, my People — thy God, my God." Naomi kept fruitleſsly exhibiting the many wants and miſeries they ſhould be expoſed to, and againſt which there was no providing, and in vain ſhe pointed out the prudent example of Orpah. Thus affectionately they journeyed day after day until they arrived at Bethlehem. It was the place of Naomi's nativity, and ſhe had long lived in plenty and hoſpitality there. The people, and many who remembered her, came out to ſee Naomi—alas, is this Naomi? the wife of Elimelech, who lived in ſuch plenty and ſhew—Ruth tender and piteous feels all the diſtreſs of her mother—our conveniences (ſays ſhe) muſt depend on ourſelves—our daily bread be earned from our daily labour—it is the beginning of Harveſt, you Mother, are weary and overcome by your Sorrows—I am able to go and gather what I can from the Field.

field. A Kinſman of Elimeleck a mighty man of wealth named Boaz, as he farmed his own lands, was watching the reapers, ſeeing the Damſel, he enquired who ſhe was, and they told him a Moabiteſs who had journeyed from Moab with Naomi, ſhe had begged leave of them to gather, and glean from the reapers, and (ſay they) ſhe has been with us all day: hearing all this Boaz goes up to her and told her, he had noticed her dutiful attendance, and affectionate care of her Mother-in-law, and deſired her henceforward to keep always in company with his maidens—

" Go not I charge you to glean any other fields,
" neither go ye from hence, abide faſt by my
" maidens, I have ordered my young men, none
" of them to moleſt you, when thirſty go to the
" veſſels, and drink of that which the young men
" have drawn."

With ſilent ſweetneſs and modeſty, Ruth gratefully accepted the kindneſs, and courteſy of Boaz, he had now an opportunity of ſeeing her perſon, and being ſtruck by her behaviour, Boaz further told her, he underſtood ſhe was come here a ſtranger, and far from her own country, that ſhe had piouſly reſolved to place herſelf under the protection and guidance of the God of Iſrael, he commended her conduct, ſolemnly he prayed God to

bleſs her, and reward a diſpoſition ſo dutiful and praiſe-worthy. Boaz on meeting her again, he bid her conſider herſelf as one of his People, to eat of the bread and dip her morſel in the vinegar at meal-times, and ſit chearfully beſide the reapers, and he reached her himſelf parched corn and ſhe eat, and was ſatisfied, and left. After this he admitted her to glean among the ſheaves, and commanded his reapers purpoſely to let fall ſome handsful, that ſhe might pick up. Ruth was now able to carry home no leſs than an Ephah of barley; full of joy and tender affection ſhe brought it home to Naomi, told her of all the great kindneſs and humanity ſhe had received, and the name of my Benefactor (ſays ſhe) was Boaz—Naomi exclaimed in a tranſport,

" The man is near akin to us, my beloved " Ruth."

During both the barley, and the wheat harveſt, Ruth continued to follow after the reapers all day, and every evening carried home her gleanings, and returned to Naomi. Aſſiduouſly thoughtful, the Mother was wiſhing and contriving how ſhe might beſt reward the tender and dutiful affection of Ruth, and at length ſhe wiſely laid a plan to engage her Kinſman to marry her, and moſt happily ſucceeded.

The

The ſtory pleaſingly concludes with the marriage of Boaz to Ruth, and ſhe bore him a ſon named Obed, and he was the Father of Jeſſe, the Father of David.

Naomi was invited to live with Boaz and her Daughter-in-law, and ſhe became an affectionate nurſe to her Son.

A Picture of Nature ſurely in its higheſt refinement—Naomi and Ruth are all tenderneſs and friendſhip, and affords us an evident proof that no difference of ſentiment or age, can overbear the ſtrong impulſe of kindred affection.

Ruth clave to Naomi, her ſoul was knit to the ſoul of her Mother-in-law, the miſery of want, no difference in religion, nor the proſpect of living in a country ſtrange to her, nor the example of her Siſter, could induce Ruth to forſake this tender friend of her heart.

Can language more ſtrongly expreſs affectionate regard? can friendſhip be more happily exemplified, or more pleaſingly rewarded?

ON THE TWO BOOKS OF SAMUEL AND THE REIGNS OF SAUL AND ISHBOSHETH.

ESSAY VII.

ON THE BOOKS OF

SAMUEL.

A PLEASING digreſſion of family Anecdotes have a little interrupted the Jewiſh Hiſtory, but they were intended to ſettle a very important Genealogy, afterwards diſtinguiſhingly glorious.

A Prophet now, the wiſeſt and beſt of men reſumes the Hiſtory, deſcribes the Events in a highly pleaſing manner, and illuſtrates his characters with beautiful ſimplicity and elegance. Samuel appeared a Prophet, when the ſpirit of Prophecy

phecy was little known, and he was called a Seer, but ſo conſpicuous were his talents, and ſo exemplary his life, that " all Iſrael from Dan to " Beerſheba(the two extremities of the Kingdom) " knew Samuel to be a Prophet of the Lord."

The firſt book contains a ſpace of near a century reckoning from the birth of Samuel, to the death of Saul in the year 2948, as Samuel died at the age of ninety-eight, and Saul about two years after him.

The two books give the concluding hiſtory of the two laſt Judges Eli and Samuel, and the Reigns of the two firſt Kings, Saul and David, together with the life and fatal end of Iſhboſheth.

During the inter-regnum and ceſſation of all order and government which fell out upon the death of Eli, the Iſraelites were ſorely harraſſed by the Philiſtines, a tyranny and perſecution which grew more and more oppreſſive and inſufferable. Samuel the Prophet became their Deliverer, He iſſued out a proclamation, blew the trumpet for war, and aſſembled all Iſrael at Mizpeh their conſtant place of Worſhip. Samuel, and all the People here kept a ſolemn moſt religious faſt, and while he was making ready his ſacrifice, after He had killed a ſucking lamb, and was preparing to offer

offer it up, upon the Altar for a burnt-offering, the Philiſtines, jealous and enraged at their meeting, marched out in battle array with a numerous Hoſt and encamped within ſight of the Iſraelites; while in high conſternation and ſorely intimidated Iſrael ſtood viewing this immenſe multitude, a violent tempeſt with thunder, lightning and hail poured down from Heaven and deſtroyed the Philiſtine Hoſt, Camp and People were all ſmitten, and thrown into the utmoſt horror and diſtraction. Iſrael thus inſpirited fell fiercely on them as they fled, and purſued the Philiſtines even to their own Cities, the very gates of Bethcar and Gath.

On this Divine interpoſition and glorious ſucceſs, the Iſraelites inveſted Samuel with the Supreme Authority, and proclaimed him Judge over Iſrael. By this total overthrow Samuel reſcued his country from the Philiſtine yoke, and put an end to a tyranny and ſervitude which had laſted more than forty years. The Philiſtines came no more into the boundaries and coaſts of Iſrael, but reſtored them all the Cities they had taken, from Ekron even unto Gath. Peace was now eſtabliſhed alſo with the Amorites.

Samuel to perpetuate the memory of this very ſignal interpoſition and glorious Deliverance

erected on the field of battle, a monument of ſtone, inſcribing it

" The Stone of Help."

Samuel was a child granted to the devout and very fervent prayers of his Mother, on which account by a moſt ſolemn vow, Hannah dedicated her ſon from his earlieſt life to God, and ſhe brought him to the Altar, and entered him into its ſervice when he was only three years old; as he grew up he miniſtered to the High-Prieſt in the Holy Functions, girded round with a linen Ephod a looſe upper Garment wore by the Prieſts, and he was firſt employed to open and ſhut the doors of the Tabernacle. Very early indeed Samuel received his firſt directions and manifeſtation from God, and it reſpected the houſe of Eli and Judgment againſt him, "his Sons had made themſelves vile, and Eli reſtrained them not." A very ſignal diſplay and intimation of God's reproof and intentions were told by the child to Eli, and the High-Prieſt mildly replied. " It is the Lord " let Him do what ſeemeth him good."

Samuel's reſidence was at Ramah, from whence He made a yearly Circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Iſrael in all their Cities. By a wiſe and diligent Adminiſtration He reſtored the

the purity of their religious worſhip, maintained order, peace and ſubordination, advancing his People to wealth honour and reſpectability.

Samuel with dignity maintained his Government over Iſrael twenty years, at which time, though they were thus diſtinguiſhingly proſpered and bleſſed by his unwearied aſſiduity, his pious and amiable example, the People became corrupt and debauched, pride and ambition ſewed its rancorus ſeed among all ranks, attracted by the falſe glare, and Pageanty of a Court the many lucrative places in the Houſe-hold or the State, naturally fond of change and eager in the purſuit of diſtinction and honours, the People tumultuouſly aſſembled at Ramah and demanded of Samuel to elect them a King; in order to relieve himſelf Samuel had placed Joel and Abiah, his two Sons, at Beerſheba, the extremity of his Kingdom, to adminiſter Juſtice and be his repreſentative, the People alledged againſt his Sons, that they were corrupt and had accepted a bribe, the Elders and Rulers availing themſelves of this report complained loudly of their baſeneſs and miſconduct, crying out Joel and Abiah ſhall never ſucceed to the Government, we will have a King, your Sons are unworthy to rule over us.

Samuel

Samuel was much diſtreſſed and angry at their viſit, He wiſely repreſented to them, the diſadvantages and ſufferings they were about to incur. The Monarchs of the Eaſt were always arbitrary, deſpotic and tyrannical, Samuel painted in glaring colours the ambition and high exerciſe of their Authority,

" He will take your Sons to drive his chari-
" ots, and be his horſemen, and ſome ſhall run
" before him. Captains ſhall preſide over thou-
" ſands, and Captains over fifties. Ye ſhall ear
" his ground, and reap his harveſt, and make his
" ſpears and build his chariots. Your Daughters
" he will take to be his ſervants, to cook his meat
" and bake his bread: He will ſeize your fields,
" and your Vineyards, and your Olive grounds
" and give them to his Courtiers: your Men-ſer-
" vants, and your Maid-ſervants, and your good-
" lieſt young Men, and your Aſſes He will put
" them to his work."

Thus Samuel earneſtly réaſoned with them, upbraided their undutifulneſs and want of gratitude, nevertheleſs the People refuſed to liſten, One and All cried out — " nay but we will have a King to rule over us."

God

God had condeſcended to be held in the character of a temporal King to the Iſraelites, reſiding (as it were) among them, and iſſuing his Decree from the Tabernacle: to require a King was therefore to reject his Government, Samuel plainly ſaw the ruin and ſad tendency of their murmurings and revolt: He was more and more at a loſs, moſt devoutly Samuel addreſſed himſelf to God, and He was pleaſed condeſcendingly to tell His Prophet " the People are rejecting Me, grant them their Petition:" and now upon their obſtinate and very raſh perſeverance, Samuel at the appointment and command of God annointed Saul King over Iſrael, a very tall and beautiful youth, one of the Sons of Kiſh and of the tribe of Benjamin.

The firſt book of Samuel relates the completion of the Prophecies, and the remaining part of the hiſtory of the houſe of Eli, you will be much ſtruck with the weak indolent infatuation of Eli, ſo wiſely contraſted with the firm piety, prudence and active zeal of Samuel. The birth of Samuel, his dedication to God, and very early employ in the Tabernacle: the curious anecdotes of Elkanah and Hannah, the Father and Mother of Samuel, are intereſting and entertaining ſubjects of the firſt Chapter. In Hannah's inſpired

Hymn

Hymn the word Meſſiah for the firſt time occurs in Scripture. Hannah here characterizes the annointed of the Lord, the exalted Sovereign and final Judge who though he had been propheſied, of, by ſeveral, had not as yet been called the Meſſiah. After the hiſtory of his own Family follows the deſtruction of Phineas and Hophni the two Sons of the High-Prieſt, together with the ſad and fatal end of the Father, who on hearing of the loſs of the battle, the death of both his Sons, and what was ſtill worſe, the carrying away of the Ark quite out of the country towards Aſhdod, Eli fainted, became ſenſeleſs, fell back from off his ſeat and broke his neck.

The book next records the very wonderful ſufferings and the ſore plagues inflicted on the Philiſtines, while they kept poſſeſſion of the Ark: they looked upon the Ark as a vanquiſhed Captive to their own tutelary God. They triumphantly placed it in his Temple before Dagon, a monument of his Victory: the day following when they reſorted to the Temple, to ſay their morning prayers, Dagon was lying proſtrate on the ground, and they religiouſly replaced their God. The day after Dagon was found again on the ground and broke to pieces. The Philiſtines choſe yet to retain the Ark, in hopes of acquiring the

the favour of ſo ſuperior a Deity, But the People, of Aſhdod declared it ſhould not abide with them, the hand of the God of Iſrael was lifted up againſt them and againſt Dagon: in a religious proceſſion they ſent it to the City of Gath, but it made the ſame ſad havock in Gath, a deſolating peſtilence raged through their City and deſtroyed its inhabitants, the Ark was then in ſolemn proceſſion carried towards Ekron, but the Magiſtrates and People came out to meet it, and terrified at the two preceeding calamities refuſed to admit it,

" The Ark of the God of Iſrael would ſlay " them and all their People.

God ſmote them every where with plagues until they had ſent the Ark quite out of their Country, The Prieſts of Dagon aſſembled, held a grand council, and adviſed the Philiſtines to faſten on two Milch Kine with proper harneſs to a new cart, and place the Ark in the middle of it, and let the Kine go which way they would, and they took the ſtraight way to Beth-ſhemeſh the firſt Town of the Iſraelites, the Philiſtine Nobles accompanied it, and watched it to the borders, and were eye-witneſſes to the reception it met with and the general joy of the Iſraelites, after which the five Lords returned back to Ekron.

The

The ſeventh Chapter relates Samuel's aſſembling the People to Mizpeh, the ſolemn Faſt he proclaimed, the judgment of God on the Philiſtines, their deſtruction and total over-throw.

The eighth is the tumultuous meeting of the Iſraelites to demand a King, to judge them, to go before them and fight their battles, and the Prophet's wife, zealous but ineffectual expoſtulations with them. In the ninth Chapter Saul is moſt pleaſingly introduced, and in the tenth annointed King over Iſrael.

The reign of Saul, the appointment and annointing of David, his introduction at the Court of Saul, his valour and his many perſecutions, whereby God choſe to humble him, and train him up for the high honours and dignity he intended him, fill up the remainder of this firſt book.

In the twenty-fifth Chapter you read of the death of this venerable Prophet and truly good Man aged ninety eight, and the book finiſhes with the death of Saul who ſurvived the Prophet only two years.

Theſe two books of Samuel carry on the hiſtory and are a very uſeful introduction to the firſt and ſecond book of the Kings. The

ſecond

ſecond book is a continuation of the life and reign of David almoſt to the death of that illuſtrious Prince, together with a hiſtory of the Church and Common-wealth of Iſrael during a period of forty years.

This venerable Prophet was a moſt amiable highly exalted and truly virtuous character, diſtinguiſhed for his Firmneſs, Piety, his virtuous Courage and zeal for God, feared, reverenced and beloved by the People, a Prophet and a Judge of Iſrael twenty years before the exchange of Government and revolt of the Iſraelites took place, and before He reſigned up his Authority to Saul.

Without a ſpark of Ambition Samuel aſſumed and maintained the Dignity, and he executed the important duties with irreproachable integrity. He gave up his Authority and Government without a ſhew of reluctance, and moſt readily at the command of God annointed two ſtrangers to royalty, to the total excluſion of his own Family.

A highly honored Servant of God, a moſt righteous Judge, and faithful Prophet, an example to his People. Amiable, wiſe and good, his character will be for ever revered, held up to view for univerſal applauſe, and the ſilent Commendation of a World.

REIGNS

OF THE

KINGS.

REIGNS

OF THE

KINGS.

ON THE LIFE AND REIGN OF SAUL.

IN the year of the World 2909 and 1095 years before the birth of our Saviour the Reign of the Judges ended. The Government was exchanged in Judæa, and the Kingdom became Monarchical.

Saul by the appointment of God was at this time inveſted with the Supreme Authority and annointed by Samuel the Prophet King over Iſrael.

With

With unaffected Piety and true Dignity, Samuel unambitiously resigned up his government. He blew the trumpets, convened all his People to Mizpeh their constant place of worship, and there publicly presented Saul by proclamation, and again annointed him King of Israel. Saul a beautiful youth, Son of Kish, a Benjamite, is very pleasingly introduced by the Prophet, and we have here his first nomination and history:

" A choice young man and goodly, from his " shoulders upwards, he was higher than any of " the People"—

In the simple stile of those early days, Saul was engaged in family duties, the greatest personages then looked after their own cattle the riches of the country, his Fathers Asses were strayed, they were lost, and Saul with a servant was sent out to seek them, (in Judæa Asses were a very valuable part of their substance,) Saul and his man travelled and searched all over the country, and passed three whole days without seeing them. Saul then says to the servant, my Father will think more about us than the Asses, do let us turn back and go home, the servant replied, by the course of the country we are very near Ramah, and he proposed to him going into the City. There was a man of God lived at Ramah, wise and very knowing

knowing and honourable, all that he ſays comes to paſs, they call him a Seer and a Prophet, He had dwelt all his life in the neighbourhood, and was high in repute, revered and beloved by them all. Saul was delighted with the propoſal, well thought of, ſays Saul, but what have we to give? behold ſays the ſervant, I have the fourth part of a ſhekel of ſilver, that will I give the man of God to tell us of our way, as they were going up the hill to the town, they met the young women with their pitchers, (as was always the cuſtom) they were fetching of water from the well, Saul enquired of them for the Seer, they told him He was juſt on the road, aſcending up the hill to the high place, where he offered his Sacrifice, and the People were all waiting for him there.

Samuel had been forwarned of God, he ſhould the very next day have a meeting with Saul. He was the perſon who ſhould be King over Iſrael, and as he was mounting the hill to public worſhip and offer his burnt-offering, Saul and his Servant overtook him, and they enquired of him after the Seer. His Father had loſt his Aſſes, they had been out on the ſearch three whole days, pray would he tell them where they might find the Seer? Samuel reſpectfully anſwered, " He was the perſon they

" were

" were enquiring for;" as to the Aſſes, they were already found, and were already at home; but (addreſſing himſelf to Saul) I have a very important meſſage to deliver to you, and if you will dine with me to day, you ſhall purſue your Journey home to Gibeah to morrow.

Samuel invited all the Elders and Rulers of Ramah, a large party of thirty, to meet Saul, and He very highly diſtinguiſhed and honoured his gueſt, He placed him at the head of his table, ſupplied him with the moſt delicate and beſt of all his Proviſion, and after he had hoſpitably and reſpectfully feaſted him, towards evening he invited him up to the top of his houſe (uſually the beſt appartments) and there Samuel held a private converſation with Saul, and told him of the high Honours and Dignity to which God was advancing him. The next morning Samuel waited upon his gueſt and called him up himſelf. Saul and his Servant ſet out on their return home, and Samuel reſpectfully accompanied them a little way out of the City; Samuel then directed the ſervant to go on before, and Saul to ſtop a while with him, that he might renew his converſation with Saul, and tell him more of what God had appointed reſpecting him; and when the ſervant was out of ſight, Samuel poured a vial of Oil upon the Head of Saul, and ſaluted him

him " King over Iſrael :" Saul's reply was modeſt and ſenſible, He was the ſmalleſt of his tribe and Family, unacquainted with the Duties of a Station ſo exalted ; the Prophet kiſſed him with a kiſs of Homage, and then with Zeal aſſured him, God would impart his Spirit, would give him a new Heart, and very ſhortly he would experience the Advantages of ſo evident and diſtinguiſhed a Change. In order to impreſs his mind the more, and gain his confidence, Samuel told him of three things which would all befal him in his way home ; at Rachel's Tomb, a place he was ſoon to paſs by, he would meet two men, they would ſtop him and tell him the Aſſes were found: Soon after parting with them, he would meet three Travellers on the Road journeying to Bethel, one of them carrying three Kids, another three Cakes, and the third a quantity of Wine, and that each of them would preſent him with two-thirds of them all ; and laſtly, he would meet at the Mountain of God, not very far from home, a Company of Prophets going into Gibeah, and Saul ſhould then and there receive the Spirit of Prophecy himſelf ; all which came to paſs accordingly. Saul arrived at home and was kindly received ; the Aſſes he told them were found, every other occurrence that had happened to him he moſt carefully concealed.

Samuel had appointed Saul to meet him in ſeven days, he would then come to him, and ſhew him what he ſhould do; at that time Samuel iſſued out a Proclamation and aſſembled all the People, the Elders and Heads of the Tribes of Iſrael to Mizpeh, their Place of Worſhip, and he here cauſed them all to preſent themſelves ſolemnly before the Lord, in the order of their Tribes, and as they proceeded on, the Tribe of Benjamin was commanded to halt, the families of it were all reſpectively called over, the family of Matri was announced, and Saul, the Son of Kiſh, publicly nominated "King of Iſrael." The young Prince modeſt and pleaſingly ſurpriſed, kept himſelf out of the way, and concealed himſelf; Samuel enquired for Saul, went in perſon to find him, led him up before all the People, and preſented him to them, "King of Iſrael." The Air reſounded with the loudeſt huzza's:—"Long "Live the King."—"May the King Live for "Ever."—The Prophet now with dignity and high propriety repreſented to him in the hearing of all the People, the Duties, Employment and Nature of his royal Station. All That which he ought to do, and What he ought to avoid. He then cauſed the Trumpets to be blown, a public Proclamation, and Samuel took the Horn of Oil and annointed him again, now in the preſence of

all

all the People, the Heads, the Chiefs, and the Elders of Iſrael.

Saul attended by a very numerous Retinue, Valiant and high in Honours, walked down to his Houſe at Gibeah.

At this time the City of Jabeſh-Gilead, (not very diſtant from Gibeah,) was cloſely beſieged by the Ammonites, the Inhabitants were on the very brink of loſing their City and their Liberties. Naaſh King of Ammon with haughty inſult, iſſued out his orders commanding every right eye to be thruſt out from every Jabuſite, a reproachful, laſting, viſible and cruel token of his conqueſt, and their diſgraceful ſubjection. The inhabitants of Jabeſh-Gilead had only obtained a truce of ſeven days. Unacquainted with the election of Saul and the revolution in the Government, they inſtantly availed themſelves of the moment, and forwarded an account of their ſad ſituation to the Elders of Iſrael, Saul ordered the Meſſengers before him and as ſoon as he heard their report, He commanded his guard to bring in a yoke of oxen and hew them in pieces, the bodies and limbs thus mangled, he diſpatched with the utmoſt ſpeed throughout all the Tribes, together with this threatning meſſage, whoſoever of them ſhould refuſe inſtantly to repair to his ſtandard at Gibeah, and follow

him to the relief of their brethren of Jabeſh-Gilead, his cattle ſhould in like manner be hewn in pieces and deſtroyed.

Awed and alarmed by ſo ſpirited a Proclamation from their young Prince, the People inſtantly aſſembled, they fled haſtily to his ſtandard, and upon caſting up their numbers at Bezek, they amounted to three hundred thouſand men, beſides thirty thouſand which were raiſed in the Tribe of Judah only. Saul had hurried back the Ambaſſadors to tell the men of Jabeſh-Gilead, He and his Army were already on the Road to reſcue them; the very morning following His troops ſurrounded both the City and the Ammonitiſh Camp; Saul and his gallant men had marched all night, and when He came near the Ammonites Saul made a diviſion of his Army into three different bodies, and at day-break fell on them ſo furiouſly, and with ſuch Courage, the Ammonites raiſed the Siege, with the utmoſt precipitation fled, leaving behind them their whole Camp and all their ſpoils.

This famous Enterprize fell out ſoon after Saul had aſcended the Throne, it was their young Monarch's very firſt Exploit, and gave his People an early proof of his ſpirited Conduct and intrepidity: Samuel had accompanied him

to

to the Battle, and to add more Vigour to his Government, he now aſſembled all the People to Gilgal, and there exhibited a public and ſolemn Inauguration with loud acclamations feſtivity and rejoicings; and at Gilgal, the Elders and People again proclaimed him " King over all " Iſrael."

Saul kept this immenſe army in pay all that year, but the year following he diſbanded them, and ſent them all to their own homes, except only three thouſand choſen men, and he garriſoned two thouſand at Mich-maſh and Bethel, and one thouſand he ſtationed at Gibeah of Benjamin: the command over theſe laſt, Saul gave to his ſon Jonathan. Jonathan was a valiant young Prince enamoured of glory and the honours of war, to exhibit his courage and military proweſs, He led his troops to Geba, and cut off a garriſon belonging to the Philiſtines, this commencement of hoſtilities threw their whole Nation into a tumult, the Philiſtines were inſtantly in arms: Saul ſounded the trumpets for War, and let all Iſrael know, the Philiſtines, with a numerous Hoſt, were already on full march, and entering the territories of Iſrael, thirty thouſand chariots ſix thouſand horſe men, an innumerable company of foot halted over againſt Mich-maſh eaſtward of Beth-haven,

haven, and there they pitched their tents and formed a ſpacious Camp; ſo formidable a Hoſt ſtruck the Iſraelites with terror, in ſore diſmay they fled and hid themſelves in caves and dens, in ſawpits and every lurking hole they could find, to add to their diſtreſs, the troops that had courage to ſtay had no arms whatever to defend themſelves; except the two ſwords which Saul and his Son wore, there was neither ſword nor even a ſpear in their whole army. Saul had been directed where to fix his head-quarters, and he was waiting at Gilgal impatient for the arrival of Samuel, the Prophet was very explicit in his orders to wait for his coming to implore ſucceſs and the bleſſing of God by ſacrifice, Saul had now looked for him day after day, for ſeven days, during all which time Samuel neither came nor ſent, almoſt all his army had deſerted him, they were dwindled away to a handful, Saul was in great conſternation and alarm, he feared leaſt the enemy ſhould come upon him and ſurprize him in ſo defenceleſs a ſtate, and before he had ſought the Lord in the way He had appointed by ſacrifice, on the ſeventh day therefore Saul ventured himſelf to ſlay and offer up a peace-offering and a burnt-offering: The Ceremonies and Sacrifices were ſcarcely ended when the Prophet arrived Samuel ſeverely reproved Saul for his impatience

and

and for what he had been doing; Saul pleaded his preſſing neceſſities and very helpleſs ſituation, the Prophet accuſed him of precipitancy and raſhneſs and ſtrikingly told him, his diſobedience to the expreſs command and well known will of God, would be the means of depriving his family from poſſeſſing the Kingdom, and the Prophet added, it will be transferred to another, to one more fit for the Government, and more worthy of its honours. Samuel proceeded on to Gibeon, Saul and his little army following him: all he could muſter up was ſix hundred unarmed men, from hence Saul beheld the formidable Hoſt of the Philiſtines ravaging all his country, and making the moſt ſavage depredations; they had formed themſelves into three diviſions, each of them were plundering and deſtroying with the moſt barbarous incurſions. One detachment were ravaging Ophrah, another laying waſte Beth-horon, and a third were plundering in the Valley of Zeboim.

During theſe ſad and horrid devaſtations the young Prince Jonathan, unknown to his Father and every body but his armour bearer, as it were by Divine impulſe, on his hands and feet, he climbed up the rock and ſurprized the enemies guard, and he killed twenty of them on the ſpot,

ſo

ſo daring an enterprize put all the reſt of them to flight, and ſtruck ſo dreadful a panic throughout the Hoſt, that they fell upon the ſwords of one another: Saul ſaw the confuſion, He muſtered his men to ſee who was wanting, and miſſing Jonathan ſuſpected he muſt be the cauſe; the Ark was preparing, Ahiah the High-Prieſt in all his robes was then enquiring of the Lord. The noiſe, buſtle and alarm grew louder and greater—Saul commanded Ahiah to ſtop the Ceremonies, He with his few men fell on the trembling troops of the Philiſtines, who all fled, and Saul's army, now quitting their caves, and their dens, and their lurking-holes again aſſembled, kept pouring in great numbers to his ſtandard and purſuing the Enemy.

Victorious, and laden with ſpoils, Saul, and his army marched home, and he ſoon acquired power to follow up his Conqueſts, and valiantly to encounter all the neighbouring ſtates who oppoſed him. Saul fought againſt Moab, and the children of Ammon, againſt Edom and the Princes of Zobah, and againſt the Philiſtines conquering and returning home in triumph from them all.

Beſides Saul's impatience to put a ſtop to the enquiry of the High-Prieſt, ordering him to withdraw his hand and retire from the Altar, for he

he would ruſh on the Philiſtine army during their high alarm and confuſion, Saul was unhappily guilty of another piece of miſconduct; to ſecure his advantages, and, as he thought, make his Victory more complete, he iſſued out a proclamation throughout all his army (in order to keep them from falling to plunder) " Curſed be the " man that ſhall eat before night." Saul's army were ſo enfeebled and faint, eſpecially thoſe who had been hid in caves and among the rocks, that many of the enemy eſcaped from them, and the glory of the day was greatly leſſened hereby. Jonathan had not heard of the proclamation, faint and hungry in his march through a wood, he eat of ſome wild honey and was refreſhed, being told of his Father's prohibition, he inſtantly deſiſted, but lamented and blamed it exceedingly: " my Fa- " ther hath troubled the land, or there would " have been a much greater ſlaughter of the ene- " my. So ſacred was the Oath held by the Iſraelites, that an inquiry and detection was ſoon made; the mode they adopted was a caſting of lots, and the lot fell upon Jonathan: Saul unaffectionately zealous, condemned his Son to die, telling him no tie of kindred or natural affection ſhould be preferred before his Oath and ſolemn Obligation. Jonathan was ſtanding alone by Saul, he inſtantly threw himſelf among the

People, and cried out, " Do not ſpare me;—Do " not ſpare me;—I die glorioufly;—Behold I " leave the Hebrews Conqueror:"— The Soldiery furrounded Jonathan, one and all declaring, " Not a hair of his head ſhould be hurt; " Jonathan hath wrought with God this day." By this wiſe manœuvre of the young Prince, he was valiantly reſcued by the People.

From among the moſt valiant and ſtouteſt of all his men, Saul elected his Body-guard; in his Army he provided for two of his Sons beſides Jonathan; and Abner the Son of Ner, Saul's Uncle, was his Commander in Chief. Sometime after this, on Samuel's intimation and direction, Saul marched with his Army into the Country of the Amalekites, the Orders the Prophet gave Saul were plain and peremptory:

" Smite Amalek, utterly Deſtroy them, ſpare " them not; Slay Man and Woman, Infant and " Suckling; Ox, Sheep, Camel and Aſs:"

Saul invaded them at the head of two hundred and ten thouſand men; following his orders, Saul ſlew them all, except a very few who eſcaped by flight, and Agag their King, whoſe beauty and ſtately preſence he ſo admired, that he was very deſirous of ſaving him alive; in this he yielded

to

to his own feelings, and diſobeyed the Commands of his God. Neither Mother nor ſucking Child were ſpared, but the Cattle were alſo ordered to be deſtroyed, and the beſt from among the flocks and herds they had alſo ſaved and brought off. After this famous and ſucceſsful expedition, Saul returned home in triumph, and with great rejoicings. Samuel went up to meet Saul at Gilgal; the King in high ſpirits, in the hour of Victory, received the Prophet with great joy, and told him, he had executed all his commiſſion, he had performed the Commandment of God: How is it then, ſays Samuel, I hear the bleating of the Sheep and lowing of Oxen? Saul, pleading Religion and Piety anſwered, they were ſaved for the uſe of the Altar, to be offered up in Sacrifice: Samuel replied, hear what the Lord ſaid to me this Night;

" When thou waſt mean in thine own ſight,
" did not I make thee Head over all the Tribes
" of Iſrael? Did not I command thee to deſtroy
" the Amalekites? Wherefore then didſt thou not
" obey the voice of the Lord."

Saul ſtrove to juſtify himſelf, he laid the blame on the People; the People had ſaved of the Cattle for Sacrifice: Samuel inſtantly told him,

 " Obedience

" Obedience was far better than Sacrifice:" and now hear thy doom, O Saul!

" Becauſe thou haſt rejected the Word of the " Lord, He hath rejected thee from being King."

So aweful a Prediction rouſed Saul, he acknowledged his Sin, and moſt earneſtly requeſted the Prophet's interceſſion: At firſt Samuel refuſed Saul, and offered to go; Saul caught hold of his garment, and it rent; Samuel prophetically cried out, " God has rent the Kingdom from " you, and given it to one more worthy." Saul ſtill importuning the Prophet to honour him before the Elders of Iſrael, and accompany him to worſhip God; Samuel yielded to his very preſſing ſolicitation and went with him to ſacrifice. A while after, the King of the Amalekites was brought before Samuel, the Prophet had enquired for Agag, and the King hoped from ſo amiable a character, and ſo merciful a Judge, he ſhould obtain Mercy; ſurely (ſays he) the bitterneſs of Death is paſt; but Samuel anſwered, " As thy Sword has made Women childleſs, ſo " ſhall thy Mother be childleſs among Women:" And Samuel himſelf hewed Agag in Pieces at Gilgal, after which he returned back to Ramah.

The Hiſtory is now blended with the Life and Atchievements of David; Saul's Melancholly; David's

David's introduction to Court; the bloody ſlaughter of Ahimelec the High-Prieſt, and much of the remainder muſt neceſſarily be told in the Hiſtory of the Life and Reign of that Prince; where alſo Saul's ſad and horrid perſecutions againſt him are recorded, together with the famous Victory over the Philiſtine Army, after the Death of their mighty Champion, and the laſt dreadful and fatal Battle, in which Saul loſt his own life, and the lives of three of his Sons. Saul had long ſuffered under the repeated and diſtracting horrors of Deſpair. The Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil Spirit troubleth him. His Hiſtory exhibits a moſt natural and very ſtriking picture of Deſpondency, with much variety and in the ſtrongeſt colours: It was in Saul evidently the effect of diſappointed Ambition and wrong Judgment, wild are his affections, and for ever on the change, from anxiety, grief and diſpair, to envy, cruelty and jealouſy: but ſuch madneſs, the creature of paſſion, ambition and vice, could never palliate or caſt a veil of innocence or oblivion over his many wanton and barbarous perſecutions, and repeated attacks on the life of David, and once upon the life of his own Son; nor can it leſſen the guilt of his inſatiable fury, with which he glutted himſelf, on Doegs impious and moſt malicious information,

when

when he ſummoned up from Nob, Ahimelec the innocent High-Prieſt, and all his Prieſts and attendants, if poſſible ſtill more innocent, and unconvicted of any crime he paſſed upon them a verdict of inſtantaneous death, and as no executioner was found who would obey the horrid and bloody orders, Saul commanded Doeg himſelf to butcher them in his preſence and before the Court.

Drawing to a cloſe, and the finiſhing action of his life, Saul under great terror and alarm, led his army over Gilboa, a high mountain to meet the formidable hoſt of the Philiſtines, and hence he viewed with aſtoniſhment their numbers, their immenſe power and martial proweſs. Saul ſunk into deſpondency, He inſtantly ſummoned his Prieſts and commanded them to enquire of the Lord; Saul received no anſwer; he addreſſed himſelf with great earneſtneſs to the Prophets, they were all ſilent; in perplexity, wildneſs, and diſtraction Saul called in his ſervants, and He ſays, ſeek me a woman that has a familiar ſpirit, and his ſervants told him, at Endor, a village hard by, there lived a woman well known to be a Sorcereſs. Saul's army were now encamped, and He at the dead of night changed his raiment, and in diſguiſe accompanied by two ſervants, ſtole out of his tent, and ſecretly walked down to the village, called the

Woman up

Woman up, entered her houſe, and Saul beſought her to bring up a perſon he ſhould name to her; the Woman knowing a detection would be death, thought they were laying a ſnare to entrap her, ſhe poſitively refuſed. Saul's over importunity and a ſacred oath of ſafety, which he made her, at length prevailed over her fears, ſhe ventures to enquire who He wanted, Saul tells her Samuel the Prophet; by her deadly arts an evil ſpirit (as ſhe thought) was brought up, and He perſonated Samuel, the Woman learnt from him it was the King, and ſhe ſcreamed out, thou art Saul, why haſt thou deceived me? fear nothing ſays the King, what ſaweſt thou? ſhe replied an old man cometh up—what form is he of (ſays Saul) how is he clad? and ſhe tells him he is covered with a mantle; and he looks like a Prieſt. The Ghoſt now became viſible—Saul ſtooped to the ground and bowed himſelf—He concluded it muſt be Samuel—the Ghoſt addreſſes Saul—why diſquieteſt thou me? Saul anſwers, a moſt mighty hoſt were upon him, God had deſerted him—the Ghoſt replied, ſince God is departed and become thine enemy, why aſkeſt thou me? becauſe (ſays Saul) you have always ſhewn ſo tender a concern for my intereſts. Hear then thy doom O Saul. "God hath rent from thee the Kingdom—it is given to David—thou and Iſrael ſhall fall into the hands of

the

the Philiſtines, thou, and thy ſons ſhall be with me to morrow."

On hearing ſo tremendous a ſentence Saul fainted, he laid on the ground as dead; after he recovered from his ſwoon and had been refreſhed by food, Saul before day-break returned back to his Camp, and notwithſtanding he had been thus acquainted with his fate and what would befal him, Saul never once endeavoured to avoid the ſtroke of death; on the contrary, he caſt himſelf with his valiant Sons into the hotteſt fury of the battle, eſteeming it a brave action, in company with them, to die thus gloriouſly in defence of his People.

In this laſt ſad and fatal overthrow, Saul was mortally wounded, and in ſeveral parts of his body; bleeding, fainting, dying, he requeſted his armour-bearer to run him through with his ſword, unwilling to fall alive the ſport and malice of his Enemies; Saul was refuſed, his faithful ſervant trembled at the orders, and Saul is ſaid to have fallen on his own ſword, ending his inſufferable miſery with his life. Three of his Sons, Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchiſua were all ſlain; and the faithful armour-bearer, ſtruck with a ſcene of ſo much horror, now ſtabbed himſelf

himſelf and fell beſide his maſter. The next morning the Philiſtines in plundering the field and ſtripping the ſlain, found the body of Saul, and the bodies of his three ſons, and they hung up their armour in the Temple of their God Aſhteroth, and the mangled bodies they diſgracefully expoſed on the walls of Bethſhan. The brave and gallant Jabeſhites remembering the ſervices of Saul, went ſecretly by night, cut down the bodies and brought them off, and according to their uſual practice, they burnt them, and gave their aſhes an honourable burial. The Jabeſhites by ſound of trumpet proclaimed a ſeven day's faſt to be religiouſly kept throughout all their City, and a public mourning for Saul.

An Amalekite with his clothes rent, and duſt upon his head, fell on his face before David, and paid him homage, he had haſtened with the news of the defeat, and arrived on the third day, bringing with him the King's crown and the bracelet which he wore, a confirmation of the truth of his ſtory. At the death of Saul, David wept. He forgot the Enemy and mourned over the man, but moſt tenderly was he pierced to the heart at the death of Jonathan; and he lamented Iſrael's ſufferings and diſgrace.

David rent his clothes, He ſhewed a lively ſorrow, inſtantly He proclaimed a ſolemn faſt to be religiouſly kept, and a public mourning throughout his army.

Jonathan's friendſhip for David, is a perfect and elegant model, truly affecting. He was ſo diſintereſted as not only to prefer his friend to himſelf, but to give up all proſpect of honour for his ſake, He choſe to be a ſubject, that his friend might be a King, and from affection to David, to incur the anger and deprecation of a furious and jealous parent, and run the riſk of his own life, to ſave the life of his friend, this, and more than this did Jonathan for David, He loved him as his own ſoul, and no one can read the thoughtful, tender care, and contrivance of Jonathan, for the ſafety of his friend, or his pious addreſs to God on his behalf, without a tear of pity and emotion: Their well placed confidence and mutual affection, their intimacy notwithſtanding the almoſt inſurmountable difficulties attending their meetings, ſo many renewals of friendſhip are all highly pleaſing: True merit, manly courage, Love and real eſteem in two ſuch affectionate friends, are bands of union never to be broken or forgot.

David's celebrated dirge and lamentation over Saul and Jonathan, is a tender greeting, and highly

highly finiſhed picture of ſorrow; it is ſurely one of the moſt beautiful elegies ever compoſed.

Reſpect and reverence for Saul, and love for Jonathan appear in the ſtrongeſt colouring, their bravery and the warlike Glory of both are ſtrikingly applauded. David was himſelf a warrior, generous and noble, He celebrates the praiſes of an enemy. The Poetic Wiſh, that Iſrael's ſhame and defeat ſhould not be told in Gath and Aſkelon, the principal Cities of their Conqueror, now in high feſtivity, dancing and rejoicing, is wonderfully expreſſive and pictureſque, and by deſiring what was in itſelf impoſſible, David pathetically repreſents his burſts of ſorrow and moſt tender feelings.

Jonathan his friend and the glory of his country is firſt and uppermoſt in his thoughts.

1 The Beauty of Iſrael is ſlain,
O' Warrior upon thy high places,
How are the Mighty fallen!

2 Tell it not in Gath,
Publiſh it not in the ſtreets of Aſkelon,
Leſt the Daughters of the Philiſtines rejoice,
Leſt the Daughters of the uncircumciſed triumph

3 Ye Mountains of Gilboa, no dew upon you,
No rain, nor fields, nor fruits for your offering,
There the ſhield of the Mighty was vilely caſt away.
The ſhield of Saul, as if unannointed with oil.

4 Without the blood of the Warriors,
Without the fat of the Mighty,
The Bow of Jonathan turned not back,
The Sword of Saul returned not empty.

5 Saul and Jonathan, in their lives they were lovely and pleaſant,
In their death too, they were not divided:
Than Eagles more ſwift, than Lions more ſtrong.

6 Ye Daughters of Iſrael weep over Saul,
He dreſt you in ſcarlet, and deck'd your apparel with gold.

7 How are the Mighty fallen! O' Jonathan!
O' Warrior! upon thy High Places.

8 I am diſtreſſed for thee my brother Jonathan,
Very pleaſant haſt thou been unto me;
Thy Love to me was wonderful,
Paſſing the Love of Women.

9 The Mighty, how are they fallen!
And the Weapons of War caſt away.

David

David more than once refers to the ſhame and diſgrace of looſing the ſhield, he commanded all his People to commit his Ode to memory, a Funeral Dirge, in which they were all required to be perfect, each one was expected to rehearſe it and publicly to ſing it, in commemoration of Saul and his beloved Jonathan.

Saul is here celebrated for his warlike proweſs, his former victories, his ſwiftneſs and ſtrength, and David ſheds a tear over his defeat and the indignities offered him after his death, and no one reflection whatever occurs on Saul's cruel perſecutions on himſelf; but the Prophet tells us, Saul was a King given unto Iſrael in wrath. God was pleaſed in the beginning of his reign to employ him as an inſtrument of deliverance to his People, and he gained many ſignal victories over their enemies, but after his diſobedience and that God had rejected him, and commanded David to be anointed in his place, then he ſhewed himſelf a haughty, cruel and bloody tyrant, obſtinately reſiſting the well known will and commands of God, holding the ſceptre in violence. In wanton barbarity Saul laid his murderous hands on the High-Prieſt of his God, his Prieſts and attendants, their wives and children, ſucklings at the breaſt, and even all their cattle, with ſubtilty and malicious

malicious fury repeatedly attempting the life of David, and once even the life of his own ſon, while all the time he was in his own conſcience convinced of the innocence, the amiable character and virtuous diſpoſitions of them both.

ON

ON THE

REIGN

OF

ISHBOSHETH.

AT the death of Saul, Abner ſon of Ner, Commander in Chief over all the Forces of Iſrael, ambitious himſelf and envious at David, proclaimed Iſhboſheth King of Iſrael, a ſon of Saul's who was now forty years of age.

Abner intended to enjoy the power and make the appointments himſelf, but he thought it prudent

that

that Iſhboſheth ſhould wear the Crown and aſſume the title. He therefore conducted the Prince and led his Army over Jordan to Mehanaim and there proclaimed him King over all Iſrael, putting him in poſſeſſion of Gilead, Aſhur, Ephraim and Benjamin, and the other tribes beyond Jordan.

David was at the ſame time peaceably and honourably elected King over Judah, and crowned at Hebron, which was then the capital of that Tribe.

The Kingdom thus divided, remained quiet two years. No hoſtilities had been declared, the ſubjects of both Princes were Iſraelites, they were all brethren, and ſome hoſtile overture ſeemed neceſſary and was expected by both. The River Jordan divided the two Kingdoms, affixing the boundaries to each.

Abner marched his Army nearer to Judah, and he encamped on a ſpacious plain on the borders of Gibeon, intending a commencement of hoſtilities. Joab, David's Commander in Chief, led the Army of Judah to meet them, and erected his Tents on the oppoſite ſide a celebrated Pool in full front of the Army of Iſrael.

The

The two Generals; as a trial of ſkill and military glory, agreed to ſelect out twelve choice young men and let them meet on the plain in view of both Camps and exhibit feats of proweſs and warlike maneuvres, a boaſt of diſcipline and manly courage. Soon as theſe brave ſoldiers met, each one laid hold of his antagoniſt by the hair of his head, and thruſt his ſword into his fellow's ſide, and they fell down together. The four and twenty men lay dead, and they were all of them Benjamites.

A moſt bloody battle enſued, Abner and his Army were totally routed, Abner himſelf eſcaped only by flight, three hundred and ſixty of his troops were ſlain, and only nineteen on the ſide of David beſides Aſahel a Brother of Joab's.

After this Victory, David's Army encreaſed every day, Joab grew powerful and formidable, the Army of Iſrael deſerted from Abner, and he became every day weaker. The War continued during the remainder of the life of Iſhboſheth, and a little more than ſeven years from his coronation.

Abner's ambition was noticed with a jealous eye by the King, and a connection he had formed with Rizpah, a concubine of his Father's, enraged Iſhboſheth and he now for the firſt time took

courage to reprove his General, Abner returned it with the haughtieſt inſult, threatning to transfer the Kingdom from the Houſe of Saul to David, and make him King over Iſrael and Judah, from Dan even to Beerſheba, the two extremities of the Kingdom.

Iſhboſheth was terrified and alarmed, He dared not further provoke his General, for he poſſeſſed much more intereſt and power than himſelf, and he lived in continual fear of him.

Soon after this, Abner ſent meſſengers to David, acknowledging the whole land was his right, Saul's Son (he ſaid) was only an Uſurper, and if his Majeſty would pardon paſt offences, both his own and thoſe of all Iſrael, and receive them into his grace and favour, Abner with the Army of Iſrael would all ſwear allegiance to David.

To prevent more bloodſhed as they were all brethren, David agreed to make a league with Abner, but one condition He preſſed ſtrongly on the General, if thou ſeeſt my face, thou ſhalt bring with thee Michal, my wife, whom Saul her Father had, in order to inſult David, married to Phaltiel the Son of Laiſh.

Michal had been before ſent for by David, and Abner was commiſſioned to demand her, of her

her preſent huſband, and the General accompanied her himſelf to the Court of Hebron, with only twenty of his brave ſoldiers, and preſented the Queen to David. Abner and Michal were both of them graciouſly received, and after a long conference, when his viſit was paid, Abner reſpectfully took leave in order (for the preſent) to return home, but Joab being told of his going, in the King's name, ſent for him back from the Banks of the River Jordan, Joab, met him at the gate of Hebron, and unacquainted with the purport of his conference, and wholly without the King's knowledge, Joab took him aſide and ſtabbed Abner to revenge the death of his brother Aſahel,

David was violently enraged with his General, publicly avowed his innocence, pronounced an awful and prophetic curſe on Joab, his children and all his family, after which he iſſued out the orders himſelf for a general mourning and directed a ſplendid Funeral, in Martial Pomp, for Abner, with the tokens of lively ſorrow and true reſpect, David himſelf walked Chief Mourner, He ſpoke a moſt pathetic Oration over Abner's grave, and David wept, and all the People wept.

Not long after this ſolemn event, two Captains in Iſhboſheth's Army conſpired againſt the life of

their Sovereign, they procured acceſs to his bed-chamber when He was lain down, in the heat of the day, and there they cruelly murdered him, and then cut off his head. The two Captains eſcaped privately, fled away with the head to Hebron, and preſented it to David, congratulating his Majeſty on the death of his Rival. The King inſtantly pronounced ſentence on the two Captains, and ordered them to a public execution, after which their hands and feet were hung up, a teſtimony of their baſeneſs and trophies of their treaſon, over a celebrated Pool, and near the public walk and general reſort at Hebron.

All the Tribes now aſſembled, and with the Elders, Rulers and Magiſtrates they came in a body to make an offer of allegiance, and pay homage to David, and they anointed him a third time, King over all Iſrael.

His Army now conſiſted of three hundred and twenty thouſand expert Warriors, well armed and men of valour.

David gave orders for the decent interment of the Head of Iſhboſheth in the ſame grave with the body of Abner, his General, in the City of Hebron, where David had built a Sepulchre to his memory. David now made a feaſt for all his

numerous

numerous Army, a feſtivity and public rejoicing which laſted during three whole days. All the tribes kept pouring in the greateſt plenty of proviſions for them all, they thus hoſpitably encreaſed the profuſion and ſupported the liberality of their Prince, reſolving to bear themſelves a part of ſo immenſe an expence and prodigality. All the People, far and near, brought in all their ſtores.

There was a general joy throughout Iſrael.

ESSAY VIII.

ON THE LIFE AND REIGN OF DAVID.

CONTAINING

David's Anointing—His Introduction at Court—Victory over Goliah—Promotions in the Army—Friendſhip with Jonathan—Perſecutions from Saul—Marriage with Michal—Conduct to Nabal and Abigail—His Baniſhment—His manner of living under Achiſh King of Gath—Burning of Ziglag—Deſtruction of the Amalekites.

THE Prophet Samuel was ordered to take a journey to Bethlehem, and carry with him his horn of oil and a young Heifer, and he was there to enquire out for a family of the name of Jeſſe.

When He arrived at the Town, he killed his Heifer, and he offered a part of it in ſacrifice, and while they were cooking and dreſſing the reſt, the Prophet goes in queſt of Jeſſe's houſe and his family, He aſks after all his Sons, Jeſſe called them all in, and cauſed them to paſs one by one before him, Samuel in his own mind pitched upon the eldeſt, Eliab a brave and comely youth, but He was given to underſtand, neither of theſe preſent was the perſon intended, the Prophet quite at a loſs enquires of Jeſſe if theſe were all the ſons he had, upon which he was told that there was indeed one more, a ſtripling, the youngeſt, and he was now watching the ſheep, he would immediately ſend for him; Samuel invites to his feaſt, Jeſſe and all his ſons and he appoints the Rulers and Elders of the Town to give them a meeting—partake of his feaſt, and eat up the remainder of his Heifer. Jeſſe and all his ſons accepted the invitation, and after a cheerful and hoſpitable meal, in the midſt of all his Brethren, the Rulers and Elders of Bethlehem, Samuel took out his horn of oil, and anointed David King of Iſrael.

The Anointing Speech while he was rubbing in the Oil.

" Now David I pray thee purſue juſtice and obey the Commandments of the Almighty. So ſhall thy

thy Kingdom remain to thee for a long time, and thy houſe become famous and honourable. Thou ſhalt moreover vanquiſh in battle the Philiſtines and with whatſoever Nation thou ſhalt wage war, thou ſhalt always come off victorious, renowned, procuring to thyſelf in this life time, great glory and honour, and leaving to Poſterity, a name famous for piety and high atchievements."

On an event ſo extraordinary, and unexpected, the Prophet leaves them to make their own reflections, He breaks up the company, and returns home to Ramah.

It is eaſier to conceive, than to expreſs, the effects this wonderful change inſtantly wrought, in this ruddy, innocent and very beautiful youth.

He no longer conſidered himſelf a ſhepherd, He was deſtined to be a King, " The ſpirit of the " Lord came upon David," He became valiant, reſolute, wiſe, fitted for the events that awaited him, the Dignity and Government to which He was advancing. David returned to his flocks, the company parted and retired, awfully impreſſed with the conſecration, and the ſolemnity of the ſacrifice which had preceded it.

Saul's impiety and the reproaches of his conſcience, deſtroyed all his peace of mind, and introduced

duced the ſad and gloomy horrors of dejection and melancholy, and his Nobles encouraged the moſt cheerful ſcenes and all the charms of muſic to awake and rouſe him from his own reflections. " The ſpirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and he unhappily became his own tormenter, jealous, malicious, envious, cruel.

It was this miſerable and dejected ſtate of the King which occaſioned David's firſt introduction to the Court of Saul.

One of the Nobles in waiting had ſeen a Son of Jeſſe's, and told the King, He was a ſweet youth, that he played delightfully on the harp, a pleaſing youth indeed of great courage and highly favored of God. Saul was ſtruck with the character, ſends immediately to Jeſſe, and deſired he would let the young ſhepherd return with his meſſengers. Jeſſe was pleaſed with the notice and with the invitation, he readily obeyed, and according to the cuſtom of the times, he ſends by his Son an Aſs laden with bread, a bottle of wine and a Kid, a preſent to his Majeſty. David's very charming perſon, his ſkill and proficiency in playing, and his unaffected manners ſoon won upon the affections of Saul, and he appointed him a poſt in his family, at firſt one of his body guards, and very ſoon after the King made him his armour bearer.

David was now twenty years of age, and he continued his places at Court until Saul was recovered from his gloom and melancholy. Jeſſe then ſent a reſpectful meſſage to Gibeah and requeſted his Son might now return home, David was his youngeſt child, he had been long abſent, and his father longs to ſee him, very deſirous of his aſſiſtance and care of his flocks, Jeſſe ſends to Court three of his Brothers, with a humble petition they might be honoured with an employment there, and ſupply the place of his Son David. Upon this meſſage, and requeſt of his father, David obtained leave to return to Bethlehem.

The Philiſtines envious and alarmed renewed their quarrel with the Iſraelites, and a vaſt Army encamped in the Valley. Jeſſe's three Sons had all of them been promoted in the Army, and He ſends David to the Camp to enquire after his Brothers, and carry them a preſent of proviſions, and he alſo ſent a preſent to the Captain of the Regiment, under whoſe command they ſerved. When David arrived at the Camp, the two Armies had advanced in front of one another, they ſtood in battle array, and while he was delivering his preſents and talking with his Brothers, Goliah of Gath, a Huge Giant, twelve feet eight inches high, armed Cap-a-pee, advancing before the

Philiſtines

Philiſtines troops, his enormous ſize, and haughty threats, were terrifying and horrible, He ſtood inſulting and defying the Armies of Iſrael, challenging them to reſt the deciſion of the day upon the event of a duel. Goliah had thus, day after day, for forty days, repeated his challenge and his inſult. Iſrael had always fled away in terror, whenever He made his proclamation. Saul himſelf was greatly afraid, and he had publicly offered a Princely reward to whomſoever would bring him the head of Goliah. David ſeemed very much inclined to encounter himſelf this great and mighty Giant, he was a very good mark, and he could always keep out of his way. Eliab his eldeſt Brother ſoon diſcovered his thoughts, and he was very angry with him, and reproved him ſharply, accuſing him of pride and ambition, propoſed his return and ſatirically aſked, who took care of the ſheep? David turned away from him, and directs his diſcourſe to another, and enquired about the King's offer and the reward. His bravery and inquiſitiveneſs were ſoon reported to Saul, upon which David was uſhered into the Royal Tent, and he there openly tells Saul, "thy ſervant will go fight with this Philiſtine." Saul commended his courage, but he formed very little expectation from ſo unequal a combat. "Thou art but a child, and he a Man of War from his youth."

David innocently and very modeſtly told, how he had ſlain a Lion and a Bear and reſcued a lamb from their jaws, and concludes without a doubt, he ſhould in like manner vanquiſh this uncircumciſed Philiſtine. The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the Lion and the Bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philiſtine, ſo audaciouſly defying the Armies of God. Saul overcome by the humble confidence and fortitude of the gallant youth, grew charmed with his bravery and heroiſm, and he began to hope ſomething from his efforts, " Go ſays he and the Lord be with thee," Saul with his own hands buckled on his accoutrements and began to equip David for the battle. He put on a helmet of braſs upon his head, and covered his body with a Coat of Mail, and David girded his ſword over all and he now aſſayed to move, but ſo unwieldy and ſo much in want of freedom and eaſe, David petitions to be undreſſed to get rid of his load and confinement, ſword and all. Unaccuſtomed to armour, in his ſhepherd's frock, with his ſtaff and his ſling, he chuſes from the brook five ſmooth ſtones, and puts them in his ſhepherd's bag, and advances boldly towards Goliah, the ſturdy Warrior ſeeing a ruddy beautiful youth in a ſhepherd's dreſs, with his bag and his ſtaff calls out to him, " am I a dog that " thou comeſt to me with ſtones and a ſtick, I will

give

" give thy fleſh to the fowls of the air and the " beaſts of the field." David with magnanimity replied, " I come to thee in the name of the " Lord of Hoſts, the God of the Armies of " Iſrael, whom thou haſt defied; I will ſmite " thee, and take thy head from thee; and I will " give the carcaſes of the Hoſt of the Philiſtines " to the fowls of the air, and the wild beaſts of " the earth; that all may know, the Lord ſaveth " not with a ſword and a ſpear—The battle is the " Lords', He will give it into our hands." Goliah drew his ſword, David ran to meet him, and he took out a ſmooth ſtone, ſlang it, and ſmote the Philiſtine to the ground, He then run forwards, ſtood upon his body, and with Goliah's own ſword, cut off his head, and preſented it to Saul. The Philiſtine Army ſeeing their Champion fall, precipitately fled, and left all their tents and baggage, and were purſued by Saul with great ſlaughter through the way of Shaaraim, to the very gates of their own Cities even to Gath and Ekron.

David carried the ſword, the huge brazen cap and all Goliah's armour to his own tent, and the weight of the armour was one hundred and eighty nine pounds Troy, and the head of the ſpear two and twenty pounds.

A gallantry

A gallantry and conduct ſo ſpirited and heroic, procured David high promotion and advancement in the Army. Saul would not ſuffer his return home, He made him Captain over the Men of War, and kept him near his own perſon, promoting him from poſt to poſt, yet every advance was obtained by ſome new exploit, his modeſt merit, David's own prudence and conſummate valour.

A character ſo diſtinguiſhingly amiable together with this laſt ſignal Victory procured him the notice, love, and friendſhip of Jonathan, the eldeſt Son of the King. He was ſo charmed with his valour, his innocent and unaffected addreſs to his Father, and h is highly pleaſing perſon, that he conceived the tendereſt regard and friendſhip for him. The ſoul of Jonathan was knit to the ſoul of David—He loved him as his own ſoul—and now that He might appear as a King's Son, He pulled off his own robe, and all his clothes, and put them himſelf on David, and he girt on him his own ſword, and preſented him with his bow and his military girdle or ſaſh.

Upon all occaſions David proved the ſincerity of his love and friendſhip for Jonathan, a reciprocal eſteem, a moſt tender, affectionate regard throughout his life, till a ſudden death divided them, at which time it broke out in burſts of ſorrow and

and heart-piercing lamentations, He wrote the moſt beautiful and pathetic elegy for his friend, and appointed a ſolemn public mourning and a general faſt to be kept by all his Army, on account of the death of Saul, and his beloved Jonathan.

If you would view a picture of affectionate, generous, and diſintereſted friendſhip, and ſee how tenderly, yet manfully to prefer, the ſafety and intereſt of your friend, to the ſafety and intereſt of yourſelf, how you may freely give up ambition and royalty, and court a Parent's anger and his frowns, to guard and ward them off another, be yourſelf a ſubject, that your friend may be a King; enter into the hiſtory of two ſuch affectionate and amiable friends.

David was hitherto advancing higher and higher in the eſteem of his Sovereign, the love of the young Princes and the People, every thing went on as heart could wiſh, and Saul propoſed to him an alliance in his family, a marriage with the Princeſs Royal. The King's gloom and melancholy unfortunately returned, and with its uſual attendants, horror, jealouſy and diſtraction. Saul had always commended and publicly approved the warm and tender attachment of his Son, and he had advanced David his friend to a high and diſtinguiſhed

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diſtinguiſhed Poſt in his Army, returning back a Conqueror and in triumph to his Capital; and David marching at the head of his Regiment behind him, all the People ran out in the Towns and Cities through which he paſſed, in high feſtivity and joy to meet King Saul, dancing and ſportive, they had Tabrets and Pipes, and Ballad-ſingers and Harps.

" Saul hath killed his thouſands,"
" David his ten thouſands."

While Saul was liſtening to the women, He ſuddenly grew furious with indignation and rage, and ever after even to the end of his life, Saul watched every opportunity to deſtroy David. It was on the very next day, while in one of his gloomy fits David was playing to him on his harp to divert his melancholy, Saul threw a javelin at him, intending to kill him, and nail him to the wall; David ſtepped aſide and left the room, and ſoon after his return Saul flung a dagger at him, and David again withdrew from his preſence. Two ſuch ſignal deliverances increaſed the jealouſy and ſuſpicions of the King, and he plainly ſaw God had protected David.

After ſuch proofs of deliberate malice and cruelty, Saul could not expect or chuſe the daily attendance

attendance of David about his perſon; He made him Captain-general of a Regiment employed at a diſtance, and David tempered his Command with ſo much kindneſs and prudence, diſciplining and heading his Troops himſelf whenever their ſervices were required, that his conduct, judgment and circumſpection gained him the notice, eſteem and love of all Iſrael and Judah; ſpirited and valiant, a good Commander and highly ſucceſsful. Saul could but obſerve how well David behaved, and how much he was beloved, and he dreaded him the more for it. But he now thought it would be wiſer, to act leſs openly and to conceal and blind his intentions reſpecting him, He therefore determines upon another device to deſtroy this noble and lovely youth, he is contriving how to enſnare him, and by exalting him high in his family, put him on performing ſome very dangerous feats of valour; and Saul ſent by his diſpatches a propoſal to him to marry his eldeſt Daughter, but he was firſt to ſignalize and diſtinguiſh himſelf in an expedition againſt the Philiſtines, expoſing him to much hazard and requiring great ſkill and valour: Saul's ſecret hopes were, that in a poſt of ſo much danger David would loſe his life among them.

David received the King's meſſage and his

propoſal very modeſtly, with gratitude and humility; but Saul ſoon altered his mind, and He married Merab, his eldeſt Daughter, to Adriel, a Meholathite, no doubt a preſent mortification and an unpleaſant proof of Saul's inſincerity.

The next contrivance of the King's was, to publiſh to his Servants and Courtiers, and by them to inform David, he intended Michal his ſecond Daughter for his Wife; but Saul bid them tell him, He firſt expected a freſh proof of his valour; an attack upon the Philiſtines, and a deſtruction of at leaſt an hundred of their Troops. The Hebrews were ſo conſtantly at war with that Nation, that an opportunity ſoon offered, and he courageouſly ſlew two hundred Philiſtines.

Saul had now no excuſe whatever, He had made a free offer, one only condition required, and that more than fully complied with, his ſecret hopes are, he may hereby lay a ſnare for his life, and Saul gives his ſecond Daughter to David; Michal indeed was ſaid to have been in love with him, and her affection and contrivance, as well as her Brother Jonathan's, was of very great advantage to him, and the ſaving of his life. David had not long returned to Court before another javelin was ſtruck at him, and it pierced into the wall behind him; He goes home to his own

Houſe

Houſe and Saul purſued him there and planted a Guard round it; his faithful Wife at midnight contrived to let him down from a window, a ſpot the Soldiery could not ſurround. Early in the morning a detachment entered the Houſe with orders to murder him, and Michal frames a ſtory:—

" David was in his bed, he was very ſick and
" in a fever; ſhe invited the men to the Chamber-
" door, points to the bed, and ſhe had put into it
" the figure of a man, and covered it cloſely up
" with the bed-clothes."

Michal then ſent them back to her Father,—the Soldiers were commanded inſtantly to return and bring away bed and all. The ſtratagem was now obliged to be diſcovered, and Saul grew quite furious with rage and diſappointment.

David made the beſt of his way to Ramah, and took ſhelter under the roof of his pious and very worthy friend the Prophet; Samuel ſoon ſuſpects his ſafety in Ramah, and He accompanied him to Naioth, a pleaſant Village, and the School of the young Prophets, not very far from the City. Saul ſent diſpatches to Ramah, and to Naioth, but the meſſengers were diſpoſſeſſed of all power to hurt David, or even to come near him, inſtead of exe-

cuting their orders, they on hearing the young Prophets ſinging Divine Hymns and praiſing God, ſeem themſelves endowed as it were with prophetic rapture and devotion; thus without executing their Commiſſion they returned back to Saul. The King diſpatched inſtantly more meſſengers, a ſecond and a third time, but with no better ſucceſs, upon which Saul ſet out himſelf for Naioth, and He alſo felt a Spirit which totally diſqualified him and he ſeemed to be prophe-ſying; Saul laid aſide his robes and his enſigns of royalty, and all the whole day he lay down on the ground uncovered and all the following night; by which means David had time to make his eſcape from Ramah unpurſued by Saul or his meſſengers. During this perplexity of ſtrange events, Jonathan his beloved friend, delighted David with an affectionate private viſit and interview, and when they parted they exchanged the kindeſt endearments, and gave each other the ſtrongeſt proofs of inviolable friendſhip, and the tendereſt regard and concern for each other's ſafety and happineſs; a very ſhort time after this interview Jonathan expoſed his own life, to ſave the life of his friend, he found him out by a ſtone (a particular mark agreed upon) juſt time enough to ſecure his flight to Ahimelek the High Prieſt at Nob, from whom he obtained ſome refreſh-

ment

ment for himſelf and his ſmall party, and upon aſking him if He could furniſh him with arms of any kind, he was preſented with the ſword of Goliah, and David girt it on, and fled away to Achiſh King of Gath; he made a very ſhort ſtay with this Prince, as both him and his character were well known to the Philiſtines; the Nobles and Magiſtrates came immediately in a body and reminded the King of the famous Song—

" Saul had killed his thouſands,
" David his ten thouſands."

It was at the Court of Achiſh, under his great perplexities, David was reported ſo well to have acted the part of a madman, in order to excite their pity or their contempt, and the better to ſecure his perſonal ſafety and get away from Gath; under ſuch circumſtances, and ſuſpicious appearances, the Philiſtine King had no wiſh to keep him.

From hence David and his few men went and concealed themſelves in the Cave of Adullam.

Saul was ſorely diſappointed when he had heard of David's eſcape, and his firſt fury and rage fell on his Son Jonathan, and afterwards upon all his Servants. Juſt at this time Doeg arrived in great haſte

haſte from Nob and brought the news; Ahimelech the High-Prieſt had enquired of the Lord for David, and he had furniſhed him with proviſion and arms; in Saul's haſty and inconſiderate rage he orders up the High-Prieſt and all his Family and Servants and he murdered them all, innocent and ignorant of having offended, the Prieſts and Attendants were eighty-five in number, and they all, in their Prieſtly garments, lay butchered at his feet; but Saul's inſatiable fury is yet unſatisfied, he ſent away to Nob, and he there put to the Sword all the Men, Women and Sucklings, Oxen, Aſſes and Sheep and all the Cattle of the place. Orders ſo bloody and deſpotic Saul found a great difficulty in getting executed; the Officers in waiting, his Guards and all his Servants ſhuddered and drew back at the thought of murdering the High-Prieſt of their God, an innocent and good man, and his Prieſts and his Family if poſſible ſtill more innocent; Saul fixing his eyes on Doeg the wicked informer, commanded him to be their Executioner, and he with his baſe confederates butchered them all themſelves. Only one of all the High-Prieſt's Family eſcaped, this was his Son Abiathar and he fled for protection to David. David comforted him all he could, kindly promiſed Abiathar every aſſiſtance in his power, and ſhould he ever have the appointment,

Abiathar

Abiathar ſhould himſelf be HighPrieſt in the room of his Father. Jeſſe and his Wife and his Children, his Houſehold and Relations, now repaired to David's Camp, and alſo the Prophet Gad, they were all flying from the fury of Saul. Four hundred diſcontented and indigent perſons alſo joined him, and they all marched together to the land of Moab; David here gained protection and a promiſe of ſafety for his Parents, Relations, and Friends, and leave for them to ſtay in the Country; but He and his Men went on to the Foreſt of Hareth, in the land of Judah, and from thence into the Wilderneſs of Zith, and his little Army were ſoon encreaſed to ſix hundred.

Amidſt the Caves, Dens and Rocks, he here ſheltered himſelf and them by day, and here his beloved Jonathan again finds him out and viſits him, affectionately enters into an Alliance with him, and by every poſſible means, encourages, comforts and ſupports David, for he loved him as he loved his own ſoul. In order to gain favour and credit with Saul, the Ziphites ſent a Meſſenger to him, and informed him of David's retreat, and upon hearing of this Diſcovery, David marched all his Men to Moan, and there Saul purſued him, and while he was pitching his Tents over againſt him, and laying a plan to encompaſs him

him and ſurround his little Army, Meſſengers came running in great haſte to the camp of Saul, the Philiſtine Army had entered Judæa and were already ravaging all the Towns and Cities they paſſed through.

Saul marched his Troops immediately to oppoſe them, and as ſoon as ever they were gone, David removed with his Men to Engedi, and concealed himſelf and his little Army amongſt its ſtrong holds, and rocky Caverns. As ſoon as Saul had drove back the Philiſtines, he followed him here with three thouſand Men, and again encamped around him.

Saul was once in the very ſame Cave with David and his Men whiſpered him, the Enemy is in your hands, put an end to your troubles; David ſeemed to liſten to them, and he drew near to Saul, and cut off the Skirt of his Robe, and then drew back to permit his eſcape un-hurt, and when Saul had got to a ſafe Diſtance, David proſtrate on the Ground, in the moſt dutiful and reſpectful manner, called out to Saul and reaſoned the caſe. How unworthily founded were all his ſuſpicions of him? See the ſignal proof he had juſt now given him, how much his Soul abhorred the crimes for which he was ſo unjuſtly and cruelly perſecuted. This humble and affecting

fecting ſpeech, and backed with the infallible teſtimony of the ſkirt of the Robe, which henow held up, melted Saul into tears, tender and ſorrowful; David now gained his ear and adds—

" I am a well-wiſher to thee and thy Houſe,
" why goeſt thou about to kill me? wouldeſt thou
" have thus dealt with me? had I fallen into thy
" Hands, wouldeſt thou have let me eſcape?
" When I cut off this Skirt could not I have cut
" off thy Head?"

Such proof, ſuch candour, modeſty and frankneſs aſtoniſhed Saul, He acknowledged David's ſuperior merit, and He cried out—

" You alone are worthy to be ſet on the Throne
" of Iſrael." Saul wept aloud—

" Thou art more righteous than me, the Au-
" thor of good to me; I, of evil and calamities
" to thee; I am perſuaded the Kingdom will be
" thine, God will give it thee; now ſwear to me
" thou wilt not cut off my Seed after me, nor
" bear in remembrance the injuries I have done
" thee."

And David under his ſad neceſſities did ſwear unto Saul.

David went up to the Strong Hold of Maſthe-ron, Saul and his Army returned home to Gibeah. David ſuſpected Saul's ſincerity, and removed his little Army further from the neighbourhood of Engedi, towards the Wilderneſs of Paran, near Carmel, in the Tribe of Judah.

The wiſe, ſpirited and noble conduct of their General, kept all his men under the ſtricteſt diſcipline; wherever they were marched they proved a ſafe-guard to the Inhabitants, being never allowed to plunder or rob them of any thing; in reward for their watchfulneſs and forbearance, the neceſſaries for ſubſiſtence were very uſually given them. Nabal, a rich and opulent Carmelite, the Lord of the Country, was ſent to by David in a moſt reſpectful manner, He was in great want of proviſion and neceſſaries, and he gave orders to ten of his young men to wait upon Nabal, and deliver him a modeſt, courteous and obliging meſſage, his Army was in preſent want and they were ſent to requeſt a ſupply; at Carmel it was now a time of feſtivity and Nabal was feaſting his ſheep-ſhearers when the young men arrived; the haughty and brutiſh Carmelite railed, inſulted and abuſed them, and the young men returned back empty to David: Nabal's Servants ran and told their Miſtreſs, and they ſpoke ſo favourably

vourably of the behaviour of the young men, and of David their Maſter and his whole party, that the prudent good Wife was quite afraid of the conſequences, and aſhamed at her heart of the conduct of Nabal; without his knowledge ſhe orders the Aſſes to be ſaddled, and haſtened to collect all the ſtores ſhe could heap up and procure, then ſhe mounts one Aſs herſelf and thoſe that were laden all follow her, and ſhe met David and all his men coming down the narrow paſſes of the Mountain to aſſail her Huſband. Abigail inſtantly diſmounted her Aſs, fell proſtrate on her face before David, and unaffectedly addreſſed him—

" Thy handmaid ſaw not the young men whom
" thou ſenteſt, I pray thee to pardon me, forgive
" the treſpaſs of thy hand-maiden, and accept of
" the preſents I have brought."

So prudent, humble and ſo modeſt a Speech had its proper influence on David, he was quite charmed and delighted with her behaviour and accepted all her preſents; but David told her, he was then on his road to deſtroy the Houſe of Nabal, and before to-morrow's light. Abigail joyfully and reſpectfully delivered her cargo, unloaded her Aſſes, humbly took her leave of David and returned home. Nabal, riotous and

drunken, knew nothing of her abſence, and he was now quite unfit to be told the occaſion. Abigail informed him of it all, the next morning. Upon hearing the ſtory of his Wife, and reflecting on the eſcape, and on his own behaviour and want of humanity, his Heart fainted within him, Nabal became lifeleſs as a ſtone, and lived only a very few days afterwards.

David was told of the Death of Nabal, and he ſent a meſſenger to Abigail and made her an offer of marriage; Abigail modeſtly anſwered—

" I am my Lord's handmaid, and not worthy " of ſo great honour; let me be his Servant " and waſh the feet of my Lord's Servants "

But ſhe aroſe and accompanied the meſſengers who conducted her to David and he married her. David had alſo married another Wife of the City of Abiſarus, for Saul had given Michal, David's Wife, to another Huſband, a Son of Laiſh, of the City of Gethla.

Saul received another meſſage from Ziph; David was again in their Territories, and in caſe He would come with his Army and aſſiſt them, they would be ſure to apprehend him; Saul ſelected out three thouſand men, and ſet out on hi

marc.

march to ſeek David; the Night coming on, Saul pitched his Tents at Siſela, a Mountain ſeven miles from a City, and the ſpot on which the Prophet Habakuk was buried.

David ſoon heard of Saul's new expedition againſt him, and he ſent out his Spies to learn where he was; they very ſoon returned and told him, Saul was marching his Army to Siſela; at midnight David ſallied out with only two companions, and he climbed up the Mountain, ſaw all their Tents, and he goes into Saul's, which he knew by a ſpear which ſtood near it, and Saul was faſt aſleep in his bed. Abiſhai his companion would fain have murdered Saul, but David prevented him — "He is the Lord's "anointed."

And David brings away a Cruſe of water which ſtood by his bed-ſide, and alſo the Spear from the door of the Tent, and unperceived by any body, he ſlipped away from the Camp and mounted the Hill, when he had got at a ſafe diſtance, and yet where he could be heard, he hollo's out loudly to Abner the Captain-general and waked him out of his ſleep. Abner cries out, "who are you?" and David anſwers, "I am Jeſſe;" how comes you, a General in ſo high

high a Poſt, to guard your King ſo badly; as the Lord liveth, thou oughteſt to die: See here the Cruſe of water which ſtood by his bed, and the Spear from the door of his Tent; what puniſhment do you deſerve? While they were talking Saul awoke, and he well knew the voice of David, and he came to the door of the Tent, and having learnt he had been by his bed-ſide, and carried off the Cruſe and the Spear, He calls out to David himſelf—

" I am firmly perſuaded that thy love and " eſteem muſt be very great, for thou couldeſt " with all the ſafety and ſecrecy imaginable have " cut me off, and Saul intreated David to go back " with him to his Houſe, no more miſchief ſhould " ever be deviſed againſt him."

David deſired him to ſend a meſſenger for his Cruſe and his Spear, adding—

" May the righteous God judge between thee " and me; the power was again in my hands to " have ſlain thee, yet I reſtrained myſelf from " it".

The proſpect of a Crown would not tempt David to a baſe, diſloyal and treaſonable action to obtain it. David did not chuſe after this to continue

tinue longer in the land of Iſrael, thought it prudent and more ſafe even to withdraw into the Country of the Philiſtines; upon this He went again to Achiſh, Son of Maoch, King of Gath; Achiſh received him, and all his men, with great kindneſs and hoſpitality, providing for them all, and he aſſigned a convenient place and a part of the City where they could live by themſelves. David dwelt here with his two wives Achinæa and Abigail, and Saul came no more himſelf, nor ſent any party of Soldiers ever after to moleſt him.

As his reſidence was within the City Walls, David did not altogether like it, he gratefully acknowledged the King's kindneſs, and petitioned his Majeſty, to allot him a place to himſelf in the Country at ſome little diſtance, aſſigning as a reaſon, he knew his preſent ſituation muſt be very troubleſome to him, and a great burden and expence to the State. Achiſh appointed him a ſmall Town called Ziklag, David lived here four months and twenty days, and by making excurſions into the enemy's provinces round about him, He brought off Camels and Aſſes and much ſpoil, one half of all which He always preſented to Achiſh.

When David and his Men were employed in one of their excurſions, the Amalekites watched

their

their opportunity and beſet Ziklag, they carried off Achinæa and Abigail, David's two Wives, his Family and all the Women, Children and Cattle of the place, and after having plundered every thing, they burnt the Town to aſhes. When David, and his Men, and ſome few inhabitants of the place returned, and found Ziklag burnt to the ground, and not a Soul left to give them the leaſt intelligence; they were all very angry with David, accuſing him as the Author of all their diſtreſs. David was himſelf perplexed and in great conſternation, and he applied to Abiathar, the Son of the High Prieſt, and aſked him to enquire of the Lord. David wept aloud, he rent his clothes, and all his Men wept bitterly; the enraged inhabitants were for ſtoning him to Death, while David was thus ſorrowing, hope and confidence in God alone ſupported him; He had ordered Abiathar to put on the Ephod and the High Prieſt's dreſs, and He now returned with orders to David, to purſue the Enemy; he would ſurely overtake them and recover all. David and his Men immediately ſet out, and they met a poor Egyptian, almoſt ſtarved to death, and David fed and comforted the poor Man, and when he had ſtrength to tell him, David found he was a Servant to one of thoſe who had plundered and burnt the Town of Ziklag;

Ziklag; his Maſter had left him on the road ſick. David now took him, with him, as a Guide, and he conducted him to the place where the Amalekites had halted; David found them all eating and drinking, rejoicing and dancing over all the great ſpoils they had taken. In revelry and high jollity, thus all unarmed, they were taken by ſurprize, terrible and ſtrange was the ſlaughter, while at table, eating and drinking, many had their heads chopt off, their bodies remained ſitting, ſome were half aſleep and they awaked to die; in the action of lifting the mug, the arm and the mug were ſent off together, and with a ſecond ſtroke the man. Savage was the ſcene, the food and the blood guſhing out in a torrent; from one o'clock in the morning until the evening, horrible and bloody was the ſlaughter, four hundred only of the young men had made their eſcape and rode away on Dromedaries, all the reſt were every one cut off. David recovered all the ſpoils they had taken, his two Wives and the wives of his men, and the children, and the cattle, after which he and his men marched back to Ziklag, with a large booty which he liberally divided among his neighbours and friends.

The prudence, manly courage, and reſolute conduct of the young Prince will now all of them

intereſt you much more. His affairs brighten up, and take a more favourable turn, the death of Saul which now happened, was an event which opened to him a fair, very natural, and eaſy aſcent to the throne of Iſrael.

ESSAY

ESSAY IX.

CONTINUATION OF THE LIFE AND REIGN OF DAVID.

Saul's Defeat, his Death, and his Sons—David proclaimed at Hebron King of Judah—Marriage with Maacah, Daughter of the King of Geſhur—Victory over Iſhboſheth, King of Iſrael—Michal brought back by Abner—Abner's Death, and Military Funeral—Conſpiracy and Murder of Iſhboſheth—David proclaimed King over all Iſrael—Jeruſalem beſieged and taken—David's Reſidence, Palace, Armory, Riches—Regulation of his Family and Houſehold—Signal Victories over the Philiſtines, Moab, Hadadezer, Zobah, Betah, and Berothai—Magnificent Preſents from Toi King of Amatha—Removal of the Ark to the houſe of Obed-edom—A ſecond Removal to Jeruſalem—Solemn Proceſſion with Sacrifices—David's Ambaſſadors diſgraced by Ammon—War with the Ammonites—Siege of Rabbah.

LIFE AND REIGN OF DAVID.

DAVID had been returned only two or three days from the ſlaughter of the Plunderers of Ziklag, when a young Amalekite with his clothes rent, and his face ſmeared, and earth upon his head, fell proſtrate on the ground before him and paid him homage. David ſtruck with the object and his diſtreſs, aſks whence he came? and why ſo ſorrowful? The Hebrews were totally routed, a moſt bloody ſlaughter, thouſands of the ſlain covered the field, Saul valiantly fought, Saul was deſperately wounded, bleeding and exhauſted he put his ſword to his breaſt, and had no ſtrength to thruſt;

thruſt; he commanded his armour-bearer to aſſiſt him, he trembling and faint refuſed to obey, diſtracted at the horror of falling alive in the hands of his enemies, He prayed me to give his laſt wound, and I yielded to his importunity, his three ſons had ruſhed into the hotteſt battle, determined on death, Jonathan, Aminadab and Melchiſuſa reſolutely fell among the ſlain. David now loſt in grief and aſtoniſhment could hear no more, the name of his beloved Jonathan, had ſtruck him quite ſenſeleſs. The young Amalekite had himſelf ſtript off the emblems of royalty from the body of Saul, and he delivered up the crown and the royal bracelets he had brought. He told them, before he left the field, the armour-bearer pierced to the ſoul at a ſight ſo horrible, fell upon his own ſword, there was not one of the King's Guards, officer or man eſcaped, every ſoldier lay bleeding and dead.

David rent his clothes, he put on ſackcloth, all his little army follow the example of their General, they wept aloud, the trumpets were ordered to ſound, a general faſt proclaimed, and days of ſorrow and humiliation.

The young Amalekite, who brought the news, was ordered to a public execution, he had lifted

up

up his hand againſt the Lords anointed, a treaſon David never would forgive, though it was the purchaſe of a crown; by ſtripping off from Saul the enſigns of his royalty, he looked forward to the proſpect of reward, and it was always his deſign, to preſent them all, to David.

Reſpecting Saul, David forgot the Enemy, and mourned over the loſs of the man, once his patron, once his friend, the diſtreſſes of his Countrymen he moſt feelingly bewailed, but the ſad fate and early death of Jonathan, had melted all his ſoul into tenderneſs and ſorrow, he could only compoſe lamentations and elegies in his praiſe, and there is nothing ſo eloquent and paſſionate, no effuſions of heart-piercing grief, which ſo much exhibit the charms and richneſs of genius, and are ſo feelingly adapted to perpetuate his love and friendſhip for ever.

As ſoon as the Days of faſting, mourning and humiliation were over, David again commands the High-Prieſt Abiathar to put on his Ephod and Pontifical habit, and enquire of the Lord where he ſhould go, and He was directed to Hebron, which was at that time the Capital City in the tribe of Judah, Jeruſalem was in the poſſeſſion of the Jebuſites, and David with his wives, his children, his houſehold, his men and their reſpective families,

lies, went up to Hebron, and they there met a peaceful reception, and a hearty welcome throughout the City and its neighbourhood.

The Elders, Rulers, Magiſtrates and all the Tribes aſſembled, they waited on David and they all paid him homage. Great multitudes here reſorted to him, and publickly proclaimed him, and anointed him King over Judah. David was now thirty years of age.

At Mehanaim, Abner Commander in Chief over the Army of Saul, proclaimed Iſhboſheth, a Son of Saul's, now forty years old, King of Iſrael. During the ſpace of ſeven years the Kingdoms continued thus divided.

The Jebuſites, with zeal and courage, had reſcued the bodies of Saul, and his three Sons from the Walls of Bethſhan, where the Philiſtines had ſo ignominiouſly hung them, and according to the cuſtom of their City, had firſt burnt their bodies, and then honourably intered their aſhes, the firſt act of David's reign, was, to diſpatch a meſſage of thanks, a reſpectful acknowledgment to Jabeſh-Gilead, commending their bravery and loyalty, and at the ſame time notifying his election by the tribe of Judah, and his aſcent to the Throne. David now entered into a new connection and marries Maacah Daughter of Talmai,

Talmai, King of Geſhur, (a part of Syria) and by her, David had born to him Abſalom and Tamar. At the expiration of two years, Abner paſſed the River Jordan, it ran between the territories of Judah and Iſrael and divided them. There was a large Pool called Gibeon, on one ſide this Pool encamped Abner and the Army of Iſrael, on the other ſide of the Pool, Joab, David's Captain-General, pitched his tents and led the Armies of Judah.

As yet, between the two Monarchs no war had been declared, no hoſtilities commenced, they were all Iſraelites, and ſome hoſtile overture became neceſſary. The Generals on both ſides, entered into a very ſingular treaty, to order out from each Army, twelve brave men, and they were to meet on the plain, in full view of both Armies, and exhibit proofs of Military ſkill and warlike maneuvres.

As ſoon as ever they had marched within reach of one another, every man took his antagoniſt by the ſhoulder, and ſheathed his ſword in his body. The four and twenty brave ſoldiers all laid dead on the plain. A moſt fierce and bloody battle enſued. Abner and the Army of Iſrael were totally routed. The General himſelf eſcaped only by flight. Joab purſues them moſt rapidly until ſunſet,

ſun-ſet. they had now entered the Wilderneſs of Gibeon, and it was here, a party of Benjamites, availing themſelves of a riſing ground, rallied furiouſly under Abner, bloody was the conteſt, Abner weary at his ſoul of fighting, ſent a flag of Truce to Joab, we are all Brethren, why ſo horrible a ſlaughter? Joab commanded the Trumpets to ſound a retreat. Abner and his men took their way to Mehanaim, and Joab marched his Army back to Hebron. On the ſide of David, only nineteen were killed, beſides Aſahel a brother of Joab's, but a much greater ſlaughter on the ſide of Iſrael. Every day David and the men of Judah, grew ſtronger and ſtronger, Iſhboſheth daily weaker, but the war continued until his death.

David had applied to Iſhboſheth, requiring him to ſend over to him his wife Michal, whom Saul in David's exile, had married to another.

Abner, the Captain-General, obtained an order from the King, to demand her of Phaltiel her preſent huſband, and convey her over to Hebron. Abner accompanied only with twenty of his brave ſoldiers, attended Michal on her journey, paſſed with her over Jordan, and Abner preſented her himſelf to David. They were both honourably and moſt graciouſly received. After making a

league with David, and Abner already ſet out on his journey back, Joab entered the City returning home in triumph from purſuing the Philiſtines, and when he was told of Abner's viſit, the General grew jealous, and on being introduced to the King, he rudely reproved him, and then haſtily ſent a meſſage, in the King's name, and brought Abner back from the well of Sirah.

Joab met him at the gate of Hebron, there took him aſide, and ſmote him under the fifth rib. Abner was inſtantly dead, and thus Joab was revenging the blood of Aſahel his brother, and ridding himſelf of a very dangerous adverſary.

When the news was brought to Court, David was ſeized with indignation and the deepeſt diſtreſs; before all his People He moſt ſolemnly called God to witneſs his innocence, He was no ways acceſſary to the murder of Abner, perfectly unacquainted with the dark deſigns of Joab; upon his General, and upon all his family and relatives, David pronounced a prophetic and moſt heavy curſe. He aſſembled his Army, and enjoined them all to march in military pomp, as mourners, before the Bier of Abner, with the livelieſt ſorrow, tears and loud lamentations, their Clothes rent, aſhes on their heads and all in ſack-cloth. David, in the ſame dreſs, with all the ſolemn

tokens

tokens of real grief, walked chief-mourner, following the corps.

In mournful proceſſion, and with all theſe martial honours, amidſt the ſighs and lamentations of the Army and the People, the Elders, the Magiſtrates and their Prince, they buried Abner in Hebron, David compoſed a funeral elegy, ſpoke himſelf the Oration over his grave, and he faſted for Abner until ſun-ſet.

Such a generous, and unaffected ſhew of grief, was noticed and greatly revered by his ſubjects, it gained him their reſpect and affection, they had ocular demonſtration of the moſt tender feelings, and witneſſed the very amiable diſpoſition and liberality of their Prince.

Baanah and Rechab, two General Officers in Iſhboſheth's Army, as Abner was dead, and the Kingdom greatly weakened, formed a conſpiracy againſt the King, and they came to his houſe at mid-day, when he was lying on his couch, and they ſmote him under the fifth rib, and then cut off his head; the two officers made their eſcape, and unperceived fled with it to Hebron, they requeſted an audience, and preſented it to David, ſubmiſſively paying him homage, and venturing to

expreſs their congratulations on the death of his Competitor.

The King's ſtern look ſtruck them both with horror, ſuch treaſonable conduct David inſtantly condemned and diſcouraged, he refuſed to be ſerved by treachery and murder, though he might reap from them the moſt ſignal advantages. On Baanah and Rechab, David pronounced ſentence of death, ſigned a warrant for their immediate execution, and after the cuſtom with traitors, ordered their hands and feet to be cut off, and hung up in a place of publick reſort, a teſtimony of their baſeneſs and trophies of their treaſon.

David now gave orders for the head of the King to be decently, and with funeral Honors interred in the ſame vault with the corps of Abner his General, and David had there built a Sepulchre to his memory.

The King had now reigned ſeven years and a half in Hebron, and he had ſix ſons born to him there.

On the death of Iſhboſheth, all the tribes of Iſrael aſſembled, and they firſt forwarded Ambaſſadors to Hebron, and afterwards the Elders, Heads, and Magiſtrates came themſelves and

made

made a league with David, and paid him homage. They then blew the trumpets, and publickly proclaimed him King over all Iſrael.

Of expert Warriors completely accoutred, the number amounted to three hundred and twenty thouſand.

David received all his People, the Chiefs of the Tribes, and the Rulers of Iſrael with hilarity and joy. He feaſted them all at Hebron three days, not only the neighbouring Tribes, but even very diſtant ones, brought in all their ſtores, a profuſion and plenty almoſt incredible, the People ambitiouſly joining in the expence and hoſpitality, beſides bread and meat and meal, immenſe cargoes of figs, bunches of raiſons, wine, oil, oxen, and ſheep in abundance.

" There was Joy in Iſrael."

The tribes had unanimouſly elected David, King over all Iſrael, a brave Man, a good Soldier, a fortunate Commander, of ſtrict integrity, moderation and liberality, on whom they could confide, and under whoſe protection and good government, they had the ſureſt proſpect of laſting ſecurity and happineſs. God himſelf had choſen and anointed David, and Samuel the Prophet whom they loved and venerated, had himſelf

given

given them the fulleſt aſſurance of his appointment and eſtabliſhment.

Jeruſalem was the ancient City of the Jebuſites, a nation whom God had expreſsly ordered the Hebrews to exterminate, and in the diviſion of the land, by lot, to the twelve Tribes, it had been aſſigned to Benjamin. At the time when David aſcended the throne, this City and its ſtrong fortreſſes were in their poſſeſſion; David in high ſpirits, with a numerous and powerful Army, and a valiant Commander, was encouraged to undertake ſome hazardous enterprize, and He led his troops to Jeruſalem, the inhabitants ſhut up their gates, and by way of contempt placed on their walls and ramparts, the blind, the decrepit and the lame, and called out to David,

" Verily thou ſhalt not come in hither, aſſu-
" redly the blind and the lame ſhall keep thee
" out."

The inſult exaſperated the King, and He commanded the ſiege to be vigorouſly ſet about, they began battering down the Suburbs, and ſoon became maſters of the lower City, and now to animate and inſpirit his men, David offered a high encouragement and reward by proclamation throughout his Camp, whoſoever ſhould have

courage

courage to get up to the gutter, mount the rampart, and become maſter of the Tower (ſmiting the Jebuſites, the blind and the lame, whom David's ſoul hateth) ſhould be Captain-General over all the Forces of Iſrael. It was Joab himſelf, that bold and intrepid Hero, who climbed up the gutter, mounted the rampart, and ſword in hand attacked the Enemy, beat them off the Tower, and poſſeſſed himſelf of the ſtrong Hold of Zion. On its higheſt ſummit, Joab calls out aloud to David, and claims his reward.

And David appointed Joab, Commander in Chief over all the Armies of Iſrael.

After the reduction of Jeruſalem David removed to it with all his Court, and made it his conſtant reſidence. He built him a magnificent Palace, and Hiram King of Tyre, hearing much of his fame and ſettlement at Jeruſalem, ſent Ambaſſadors thither to congratulate him, formed a friendly alliance with David, and liberally furniſhed him with Cedar trees, timber, various articles for his buildings, and a great number of artificers, as the Iſraelites were principally farmers and graziers, unleſs they were employed in the duties of the Camp and the exerciſes of war.

The thirtieth Pſalm is an elegant and ſublime Ode, wrote by David as a conſecration, and dedication of his Palace.

David's

David's proſperity was every day upon the increaſe, like a ſwelling ſtream enlarging its progreſs, his riches and his honours were advancing greatly, and when his royal Palace was finiſhed and he had brought all his family into it, he ſettled and eſtabliſhed his houſehold, wiſely and diligently inſpected into all his ſervants and attendants, and regulated his whole Court. David was deſirous of holding up his own conduct, as an example and pattern of religious order, and virtuous emulation to his People, his Houſehold, his Children and his Army. His Officers were all of them men of principle, honour, of undaunted courage and ſobriety.

The Hiſtory and wiſe regulations of his family, are recorded in the hundred and fifth Pſalm. An Ode highly honourable to his memory, as a virtuous Sovereign, and a good man.

David next employed himſelf in ſurveying and giving orders reſpecting the City, He greatly enlarged Jeruſalem and beautified it, formed wide and regular ſtreets, built Palaces for the young Princes and his Nobles, He erected a high Tower in a celebrated fortreſs called Millo, a royal Palace on a riſing ground, and built a magnificent Armory, and hung up in it a thouſand bucklers, all ſhields of mighty men diſtinguiſhed for their bravery, and warlike conduct.

Jeruſalem

Jeruſalem became henceforward the Captital of the whole Kingdom, and the royal reſidence of all his ſucceſſors, but its peculiar honour was, it being eminently called the City of the Great King, the City of God, in Salem was his Tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion. Jeruſalem the Holy City. David now gloried, God had exalted him King over Iſrael, to make his People proſperous, happy, and victorious. God had eſtabliſhed his Kingdom.

After he had buſied himſelf ſome years in theſe publick undertakings, and he had accompliſhed them all, David full of patriotic zeal, compoſed the eighty ſeventh Pſalm. " The Lord loveth the " gates of Zion—of Zion it ſhall be ſaid, this, and " that man was born in her: and the Higheſt him- " ſelf ſhall eſtabliſh her". David had now compleated his deſigns, built his Palaces, beautified and enlarged his City, and provided largely for its ſecurity.

The Philiſtine neighbours, and other Kingdoms round about, alarmed at his conqueſts, his high exaltation and proſperity, grew jealous, and reaſonably ſuſpected, he would ſoon extend his arms and invade their territories; they made therefore great preparations, encamped with their Armies in the valley of Rephaim, and by way of boaſt

and a ſhew of their readineſs, marched in great numbers through Judæa, and boldly laid ſiege to the town of Bethlehem, and as ſoon as they became maſters, placed a ſtrong garriſon within it. David had no notice whatever of their intentions, no time to intercept their march, or make reſiſtance, He and his Nobles thought it moſt ſafe and prudent to retire to a neighbouring fort, the ſtrong Hold and cave of Adullam, and there aſſembled all his Army. Abiathar was arrayed in his Pontifical Habits, and the King, by means of the High-Prieſt, devoutly applied to God, the anſwer was brought him here.

" Go inſtantly. purſue the Philiſtines, you ſhall " come off victorious".

Confident and thus encouraged, David overtook them at Baal-perazim, and obtained a complete victory. The Philiſtines fled and left their Gods, David and his men (according to the command of God) committed them all to the flames. Enraged and diſtreſſed for their Images and their Gods, with freſh forces and new allies, the Philiſtines were now ſeen ſpreading themſelves again in the valley of Rephaim. David boldly met them, obtained a ſecond victory, and purſued them from Geba, even unto Gazer, and the very gates of their Cities.

Encouraged

Encouraged by his ſucceſſes, his Army thus inſpirited, and an enemy to ſloth and inaction, David now extended his conqueſts over other neighbouring Nations around him, by all which he greatly encreaſed his own power and riches, and by making them tributary, and leſs formidable, he eſtabliſhed more laſting peace, with many bleſſings to himſelf, his ſubjects and poſterity. David marched a powerful Army againſt Moab, his valiant troops conquered, and put to the ſword, two thirds of all the forces of the Moabites. and he laid the Kingdom under an annual tribute to Iſrael. He then entered other neighbouring Kingdoms, and encountered Hadadezer, Son of Rehob, King of Zobah, and he fought him on the plain, near the banks of the river Euphrates, twenty thouſand Infantry, and ſeven thouſand Cavalry were put to the ſword, a thouſand chariots were taken, one hundred of which the King ordered to be reſerved for his own uſe, and directed that all the reſt ſhould be burnt.

In this laſt expedition, and victory over Hadadezer, David gave great offence to Syria, the King of Zobah was his faithful ally and boſom friend, and to revenge his quarrel, and the Princes diſgrace, the Syrian King, at the head of a formidable Army, ſet out from Damaſcus, to meet the

Conqueror

Conqueror and engage him in perſon. The Syrian Army was almoſt all of it cut to pieces, the Hebrews ſlew twenty thouſand in the field, and the reſt eſcaped only by flight; David cloſe at their heels, drove them back, even to the gates of their Capital, and impoſed a yearly tribute on Syria.

In this laſt exploit, David brought home with him a number of Golden quivers and arrows of gold, and he hung them up, as ornaments, in his Armory, and dedicated all his rich ſpoils to the ſervice of God.

In the hour of Victory, encouraged by his ſucceſſes, David marched with his Army againſt Betah, and Berothai, two famous and capital Cities of Adrazer, valiant and powerful, enjoying the favour and protection of his God, David laid ſiege to them, became maſter of both, and laden with his immenſe ſpoils, returned in triumph to Jeruſalem, amidſt the general joy and acclamations of his People.

Toi King of Amatha, a neighbouring Prince, ſorely alarmed at theſe many ſignal victories, and David's approach ſo near to the borders of his territories, collected together all his rich veſſels of gold and ſilver, very coſtly and of moſt

curious

curious workmanſhip, theſe with other noble and valuable preſents, the King ſent by his Son Joram, with compliments of congratulation to David on his late glorious victories, and made a propoſal to him of a league of amity. David accepted all his preſents, entered into a friendly alliance with the King of Amatha, courteouſly and hoſpitably entertaining his Son at the Court of Jeruſalem.

David had forwarded an Army into Idumea, his Generals had been all victorious, and now, on their return, came home laden with ſpoils. The King placed a ſtrong garriſon on the confines of Idumea, and made the whole Country tributary to Iſrael.

In his high Court of Judicature, David ſat Judge; it was his great delight to receive the petitions of his ſubjects, to hear cauſes himſelf, and adminiſter impartial juſtice with the ſtricteſt equity.

Joab was confirmed in his honourable poſt of Captain-General, Commander in Chief over all the Armies of Iſrael. Jehoſophat was elected his Recorder. Zadoc and Abiathar High-Prieſts. Seraiah was his Secretary of State. Benaiah Captain of his Life-guards. Beſides theſe he maintained a troop of Body-guards, and another

another Regiment, to be always about his perſon, and called his Watch.

David's Sons were in places of Authority and Dignity, and Chief Rulers over Magiſtrates and Officers.

There were now in the Army, thirty Valiant Warriors, who had diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their bravery, all of them General Officers, ſignalized by their heroic valour, and good conduct in hazardous exploits and poſts of ſignal danger, and his enemies were weakened, humbled, and almoſt all of them tributary. David renewed his friendly alliance with Hiram King of Tyre, and that Prince ſupplied him with immenſe quantities of Cedar, and a number of expert workmen to aſſiſt him in his improvements, and add grandeur, beauty, and magnificence to the City, his royal Palaces and publick buildings.

David, more at peace and in great proſperity, was at leiſure to enlarge his domeſtic comforts, and attend to his houſehold and family.

As under the diſpenſation in which he lived, the number of his wives and concubines were unlimited, David formed many new connections, and married ſeveral more, and he had a large

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and numerous progeny born to him in Jeruſalem, beſides all thoſe, who had been born to him in Hebron, and they added to the grandeur of his Court, and the happineſs and proſperity of his Kingdom.

When he felt himſelf thus peaceably eſtabliſhed, and ſettled in Jeruſalem, David was naturally led to reflect on paſt life, and the many mercies and deliverances of his God, and now the friendſhip of his beloved Jonathan afreſh occurs to him, is there (ſays he) any left of the houſe of Saul, that for Jonathan's ſake I may ſhew him kindneſs, and David recollected Ziba a ſervant of Saul's, and he enquired of him after Saul's family; Ziba told him, there is yet a Son of Jonathan's, and the King ſays, where is he? and David ſent for Mephiboſheth, ſhewed him much kindneſs, ſettled the family eſtate upon him, and appointed Ziba his ſteward.

A ſeries of ſucceſſes, and the bleſſings of peace, inſpired this pious Prince with ſentiments of religious gratitude, and devout acknowledgments. David zealouſly ſtrove to make Jeruſalem, the City of God, the centre of his Worſhip, and he devoutly laid a plan, for bringing the Ark of God into it. The Ark had already continued almoſt fifty years at Kirjath-jearim. David was

deſirous

deſirous of placing it in the beſt and moſt elegant apartment of his new Palace, and there to have the ſtated, and daily ſolemnities of Divine Worſhip publickly performed. The Ark was the emblem of the Divine preſence, God is ſaid to have dwelt between the Cherubims, it was now at the houſe of Abinadab on the hill, and had been in a very ſingular manner brought thither. After a bloody battle, in which the Philiſtines were Conquerors, the Ark of God was carried off by the Enemy, and placed in the Temple of their Gods, but on account of the many plagues and judgments they had incurred by it, the Philiſtines, by the advice of their Prieſts, had fixed it on a carriage, harneſſed a yoke of Oxen to it, and permitting them to take their own courſe, the Ark was by them brought back into the territories of Iſrael, and they ſtopped at the houſe of Abinadab.

The Splendour, Dignity and Safety of Jeruſalem, were objects of high value and importance to David, and now the very firſt wiſh of his heart was, to ſecure to it, the more immediate Preſence, and Protection of the God of Iſrael.

The Ark was a Cheſt of Shittim Wood, one yard and half in length, over-laid within and without, with pure Gold, the top formed a Seat, and

and it was called, the Mercy-Seat. Two tables of Stone were placed within, and the ten Commandments engraven on them. Theſe were called the Teſtimony, the Unalterable Laws of God.

In the Hebrew Republick, the Ark was looked up to, with ſacred awe and veneration, a ſtanding Memorial for Jehovah, the centre of Religious Worſhip, where they immediately applied for his favour and directions.

Jeruſalem to poſſeſs, this viſible emblem of the Divine Majeſty, the diſplay of his glory and his preſence, exhibited in a cloud or miſt over the Mercy ſeat, and ſo awfully conſpicuous there, was moſt earneſtly longed for by David, and he aſſembled together all his People, thirty thouſand men, all his Princes and Nobles, his Generals, Captains of thouſands, and Captains of hundreds, and of theſe he formed a grand Council, revealed to them his pious wiſhes and intention, and demands their advice and aſſiſtance.

The propoſal was unanimouſly agreed to, upon which, David by Proclamation, brought together the Prieſts, the Levites, and the People, and he led them himſelf to Kirjath-jearim, and having prepared a new carriage drawn by Oxen, Uzzah and Ahio, the two Sons of Abinadab, drove it to

their Father's houſe, and then placing the Ark upon it, they both attended it, Ahio marched immediately before, and Uzzah on the one ſide of it. The greateſt demonſtrations of joy were every where ſeen, as ſoon as it began to move, a long proceſſion and numerous band of Sacred Muſic kept playing before it, pſalteries and timbrels, cornets, and cymbals, accompanied with the voices of the Levites.

This national ſatisfaction and general joy, of King and People, was ſuddenly interrupted, as they paſſed the threſhing floor of Nachon, one of the Oxen ſtumbled and ſhook the Ark, Uzzah fearing leſt it ſhould fall off the carriage, raſhly put his hand out to ſupport it; Uzzah was only a Levite, and by the Jewiſh Law forbidden to touch it, and the penalty was death, the Ark was the dwelling place of Jehovah, under his protection and guardian care, Uzzah had violated the Law, the hand of God ſtruck Uzzah, he fell down dead by the Ark.

This moſt diſtreſsful event perplexed and greatly grieved the King, " David was ſore " afraid of the Lord that day, and (he ſays) " how ſhall the Ark of the Lord come to me ?" David immediately deſiſted from his undertaking, he ordered it into a houſe near, and it belonged

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to Obed-Edom, a Levite, and there it continued three months, and during all that time, Obed-Edom was diſtinguiſhingly rewarded, by a very unuſual and remarkable proſperity.

This viſible bleſſing over Obed-Edom, and all his family, was ſoon noticed by David, and it encouraged him to remove the Ark to Jeruſalem.

David again aſſembled all his People, and his grand Council of Princes, Nobles, Generals, Captains of thouſands, and Captains of hundreds, to aſſiſt him on this very ſolemn buſineſs, made ſtill more awful by the judgment inflicted and fatal end of Uzzah, he ſent for Zadoc and Abiathar the High-Prieſts, and ſix Principal Levites, and he ordered them carefully to abſtain from all pollution, and purify themſelves in order to bring the Ark upon their ſhoulders (and they ſhould be accompanied, and aſſiſted by all Iſrael) to the apartment, he had allotted and prepared for it. David revealed to them what he ſuſpected to be the cauſe of the former interruption and diſtreſs, the error they had committed in attempting to convey it in a carriage, when the way of removing it on former occaſions, had been ſo expreſsly directed them by God.

In obedience to the King's Command, the Prieſts and the Levites abſtained from all pollution, and ſanctified themſelves, they were all cloathed in robes of white linen, eighteen were appointed as porters with ſtaves to ſupport the Ark, the reſt ſung the Anthem, and ſuch ſacred Hymns, as David had himſelf compoſed on this occaſion, and their voices were accompanied with a variety of inſtruments, a band almoſt without number. Two Prieſts were placed on each ſide, as door-keepers, ſeven more walked in proceſſion before the Ark, ſounding loud their Trumpets, and the whole People with their Princes and Nobles, Elders, Heads, and Rulers, Generals, Captains of thouſands, and Captains of Hundreds, all with muſical inſtruments, and a numerous choir of Virgins (all in white) accompanied the muſic with their voices, exultingly expreſſing, by frequent and loud acclamations, their joy and extacy, during the high ſolemnity of this very devout and glorious proceſſion.

David himſelf laid aſide all his Robes and Enſigns of Royalty, and he put on a linen dreſs, in the form of a Levites, and he girt round him a linen Ephod, with his Harp in his hand, on which he played himſelf, and expreſſed the higheſt

demonſtration

demonſtration of joy, in ſight of the Ark, the Emblem of the Preſence of God, according to the cuſtom of the times, and their uſual manner on their grand ſolemnities: in order to render the march and proceſſion more ſacred and religious, the King at proper intervals put up devout prayers to God, a moſt ſolemn Worſhip, and the Prieſts performed the Ceremonies of Sacrifice, and offered up peace-offerings and burnt-offerings.

Alternately, and in chorus, they chanted that ſublime Ode, the ſeventy eighth pſalm—

David rejoiced he had now, his King and his God, more immediately preſent with him, and he perſuaſively exhorted all his People, to acknowledge this Almighty God, the God and King of Iſrael, to be aſſured he is preſent every where, both in his Heavenly, and this his earthly Sanctuary, the Author of his proſperity, the Author of his People's happineſs.

During the whole proceſſion, the nation were putting up fervent prayers to Almighty God, who had ſo honoured the Ark with the tokens of his preſence, and had now made Jeruſalem his perpetual habitation, became Guardian Protector of the City, intereſted in its ſafety, proſperity and peace; and God never did deſert Jeruſalem,

or

or give it up to be ravaged or plundered, from the time of this ſolemn proceſſion, and entrance of the Ark, until the deſtruction of it, by Nebuchadnezer King of Babylon, but under many Perſecutions and diſtreſſes, by ſignal interpoſitions and deliverances, God always did preſerve it, and very diſtinguiſhingly, under all the Reigns of its pious, worthy, and good Princes.

After the Ark was ſet down, by the Prieſts and Levites, under the Tent David had pitched for it; at the Altar, erected before the Tabernacle David himſelf preſided, while the Burnt-Offerings, and Peace-Offerings were offered up to the Lord. Then the pious King, turned himſelf towards his People, and moſt ſolenmly pronounced a bleſſing on them, in the Name of the Lord of Hoſts, exhorting them, to keep their hearts perfect in the ſight of God, to walk in his Statutes, and to keep his Commandments, as at this day.

Behold a Partriot King, the Father of his People, ſupplicating Almighty God in behalf of all his ſubjects, exhorting them to Piety, and the Religious forms God had eſtabliſhed among them, to ſecure His protection and their own proſperity.

David

David with royal munificence ordered to every man, and every woman, a loaf of bread, a ſuitable proportion of meat, and a flagon of wine, and then joyfully ſent them, every one to his own houſe.

After David had thus depoſited the Ark at Jeruſalem, he appointed the Levites to their reſpective offices, diſtributed them into diſtinct claſſes, with royal munificence he provided for the celebration of publick worſhip before the Ark, with the cuſtomary pomp and ſplendour of thoſe times, and the genius and circumſtances of the People, and David compoſed an Ode of praiſe and thankſgiving, principally recorded in the hundred and fifth pſalm.

David now expreſſed his moſt earneſt wiſhes to build a Temple to the Lord, and he told his deſigns to Nathan the Prophet, who approved of his intentions and aſſured him, God would certainly be well pleaſed with ſuch piety and zeal for his ſervice, but it was on the enſuing night, God ordered the Prophet to carry him a very ſignal prohibition, and yet with all, the kindeſt aſſurances that his Son ſhould build him a houſe, and that his Kingdom ſhould be eſtabliſhed for ever. Full of the warmeſt gratitude, David in

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the preſence of Nathan, burſt out into the moſt humble expreſſions of praiſe and acknowledgment, and theſe extemporaneous dictates of piety, and devotion, are recorded in the eighteenth and following verſes, of the hundreth and twenty ſecond Pſalm.

About this time, Nahaſh King of Ammon died, and was ſucceeded by Nahun his Son. Upon this occaſion David ſent Ambaſſadors to congratulate the young Prince on his acceſſion, and as his Father was his friend and ally, he propoſed the ſame amicable league and alliance with the Son, and he aſſured him of his reſolution, on his part, inviolably to preſerve it. The Princes and Nobles of the Court of Ammon, miſunderſtood the nature of the embaſſy, the friendſhip and kindneſs intended by David, and they made the King believe the Ambaſſadors were ſent as ſpies to report of the country, and inſpect into its reſources and ſtrength. Thus deceived the young Prince liſtened to the remonſtrances of his Nobles, and treated the Ambaſſadors with contempt and indignity, he gave immediate orders to have one half of their beards ſhaven off, one half of their cloaths cut away, thus ignominiouſly diſgraced he ſent them back to David, and with no other meſſage or anſwer whatever.

When

When David beheld his Ambaſſadors on their return, ſo ſhamefully disfigured, he zealouſly ſet about retrieving their honour, and reſenting the affront. David inſtantly blew the trumpets, and proclaimed War againſt the Ammonites. The Court of Ammon, well knew, the inſult would be noticed; it was in fact, a commencement of Hoſtilities, they formed new Alliances, and made all neceſſary preparations, the Treaſury was opened, a thouſand Talents were ſent to Meſopotamia, informing them, they would receive into preſent pay, as many Troops, as they could ſend them. A thouſand Talents more they forwarded to Zobah, and to two other powerful Princes in their neighbourhood, with whom they formed a league of amity, and aſked their immediate aſſiſtance. Such very numerous and formidable Alliances, did not intimidate David. They had waged War. His cauſe was juſt. His truſt in the Lord his God. David ſounded his trumpets, aſſembled his whole Army, appointed Joab his General to head them, and to march inſtantly againſt Rabbah, the Capital of the Ammonites. The rough and hardy ſoldier, as ſoon as he was inveſted with the Command, entered the Country, marched his Army towards the City, and encamped within ſight of Rabbah. The Ammonites opened their gates, and poured out in battle

array, to the right and to the left, and formed themſelves into two diviſions. The Auxiliaries filled all the plain. The Ammonites placed themſelves in full front of Joab, but not very diſtant from their own gates.

Of ſuch a diviſion, Joab, an experienced General, wiſely availed himſelf, he choſe out a ſelect number of his brave and valiant Troops, and ſtationed them in full front of the Auxiliaries. He ordered his brother, to draw up the remainder in line of battle, and boldly compel the Ammonites to engage with him. Joab further agreed with his brother, that in caſe the Auxiliaries ſhould prove too powerful for him, and his men, he ſhould withdraw his Troops from the Army of the Ammonites, and bring them inſtantly to his aſſiſtance, and Joab in return, would ſend ſpies, and watch his diviſion and progreſs, and fly to his ſuccour, in caſe he, and his troops ſhould be overpowered by the Ammonites. With undaunted courage, obſtinacy and reſolution, Joab engaged the Auxiliaries, the Syrians all fled, ſo fierce and tremendous was the attack, Joab was ſoon victorious and maſter of the Plain. The Ammonites refuſed to engage at all, they retreated within their gates, and ſhut themſelves cloſely up within their walls.

After this total defeat of the Auxiliaries, and the blockade of the Ammonites, Joab marched his Army back to Jeruſalem.

The Ammonites ſorely exaſperated, notwithſtanding their ill ſucceſs, ſought out new Allies, they made formidable preparations for War, raiſed new recruits, augmented their Army, and fortified their City, and never offered any overtures of peace whatever. David again aſſembled his forces, and he took the command on himſelf, marched his Army to the Plains of Jordan, and ſoon after, he paſſed the River: there the Ammonites gave him battle, a moſt bloody conflict, but a ſignal and glorious victory was obtained by David, forty thouſand Infantry, and ſeven thouſand Cavalry, were all put to the ſword, and their Commander in Chief.

Meſopotamia here ſent Ambaſſadors, and very rich preſents to David, and they became tributary.

Juſt before the winter, David returned to Jeruſalem, laden with his rich preſents and his ſpoils, and early in the ſpring, he ſent Joab his General againſt the Ammonites. Joab marched his brave Troops, a powerful Army into their Country, laid waſte all their lands, and ſhut them up again

in Rabbah their Capital, he erected his ramparts and dug his trenches, made all the neceſſary preparations for a vigorous ſiege, and he ſat down with his whole Army before it.

ESSAY

ESSAY X.

CONTINUATION OF THE LIFE AND REIGN OF DAVID.

His Amour with Bathſheba—Uriah's Conduct—David's letter to Joab—Uriah's Death—Marriage of Bathſheba—The Prophet Nathan's Viſit—His Wiſe, Elegant, and Striking Lecture—David's Sentence on himſelf—His Penitential Sorrow—Birth and Death of a Son—Solomon born—Nathan appointed his Tutor—The Royal City of Rabbah taken—Magnificent Crown—Amnon's baſeneſs—Tamar's diſtreſs—Abſalom's Murder of Amnon—David's Sorrow and Aſtoniſhment—Abſalom's flight to Geſhur, his Grand-father—His Return, and Reconciliation—His Inſinuations and Rebellion—David's Flight—His mournful Proceſſion His meeting with Huſhai, Ziba, and Shimei—Abſalom proclaimed—Achitrophel's Perfidy—His Death—Wiſe advice of Huſhai—Abſalom's battle, Death—David's Grief and Lamentations—Joab's Remonſtrance.

HITHERTO

CONTINUATION OF THE

LIFE AND REIGN OF DAVID.

HITHERTO, you have ſeen a moſt amiable and highly virtuous character; a brave Commander, a good Soldier, of active piety and zeal for God, an example to his People, a Father at home, and their ſucceſsful Champion in the field.

Would to God, I could drop a tear of oblivion, over one moment of his life, and blot it out from the Annals of Hiſtory for ever.

His

His amour with the wife of Uriah, and the orders he gave to deſtroy the huſband, are two crimes highly diſtreſsful and enormous, but he was ſo grieved for them both, and with ſo much ſenſibility expreſſes his heart-piercing anguiſh, and the bitterneſs of repentance, that the paſſage in his life, you ſo much grieve for, and over which you would ſo gladly caſt the veil, is highly inſtructive and edifying, a leſſon of vigilance, a model of ſelf-abaſement. Aſſuredly the pleaſures of the moſt proſperous ſinner, could never counterbalance a hundredth part of thoſe ſenſations, he pathetically and ſo exquiſitely deſcribes.

Under the diſpenſation, David lived, he was allowed to have as many wives, and concubines, as he pleaſed, and he hoped at firſt, he was not violating the religion, and laws of his Country. But, he was informed, ſhe was Bath-ſheba, a married woman, the Daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah, a brave diſtinguiſhed Officer, now in his ſervice, and at the ſiege of Rabbah, the royal City of the Ammonites, under Joab his Commander in Chief.

The equity of the Moſaic law, allowed of no attonement for adultery and murder. So pure, death was the puniſhment always.

Hurried

Hurried and blinded by paſſion even to madneſs, David at the expence of conſcience, honour, duty, ſends for Bath-ſheba. She came, ſhe yielded, and ſhe too ſacrificed chaſtity, honour, faith, and incurred guilt, and its legal puniſhment, death.

Bath-ſheba went home, we hear no more of her, until ſhe ſends a faithful ſervant to David, ſecretly to apprize him of her pregnancy, it was an occurrence, which threw them both into the greateſt perplexity, how to avoid the ſcandal, infamy, and puniſhment. David by the conſciouſneſs of guilt, brought himſelf into the moſt unmanly, mean, and deceitful ſhifts; he ſends for Uriah home from the ſiege, under the pretence of making inquiries reſpecting Rabbah, he entertains him at his table, and then ordered him home to his own houſe; but Uriah ſlept in the Barrack with the ſoldiers on guard, the next day, the King invites him again, and he plies him freely with the bottle, and he contrives to make him drunk. Drunk or ſober, the rough and hardy ſoldier would never go home, Uriah ſlept again with the Palace-Guard. His conduct ſtrangely agitated and diſappointed David, every art whereby he hoped to conceal his guilt, failed him; one only way remained; he reſolved to

cloke

cloke one ſin, by committing a much worſe; he lays his plans, fixes on a method, and as vice is ingenious, he treacherouſly executed it, a moſt deliberate murder, but he contrived to commit the deed to another. Uriah's ſtay had been in vain prolonged, his diſpatches are now given him, and with them, the following letter to Joab, his General, ſealed with the royal ſignet.

" Set Uriah in the fore-front of the hotteſt " battle, retire from him, that he may be ſmit- " ten and die."

Joab appointed him a poſt of great danger on the City Walls, Uriah was killed by a ſally from the Garriſon, bravely fighting for his murderer.

An expreſs was diſpatched with the news, Uriah's name in the liſt of ſlain, David wrote a formal anſwer back to the Camp, the ſword of war knew no diſtinction, and he ordered Joab, to maintain his courage, perſevere in his attack, and the City would be ſpeedily reduced.

Bath-ſheba put on her weeds, and ſoon after the uſual days of mourning were over, David ſends and conducts her to the Palace, and publickly married her. Hereby he ſcreens her from a proſecution for adultery, ſecures her from the

penalty of death, and makes her the amends in his power, for the injury he had done her.

David does not appear to have felt as yet, any checks of conſcience for his crimes, the review of his conduct does not ſeem to have ſtruck him with remorſe, inſenſible and callous, he enjoys the pleaſures he had purchaſed, even at ſo horrible an expence, the ſiege went on proſperouſly, and his multiplicity of buſineſs, and Government affairs engroſs his thoughts and his time. However inattentive and eaſy David might be, the Hiſtory informs us, the Lord was angry with David, and He awakened hisconſcience, ſhewed him the heinouſneſs of his crimes, brought him to a ſenſe of his guilt, to penitential ſorrow, and devout acknowledgment. It was on this occaſion, God was pleaſed to employ his Prophet Nathan, he requeſted an audience of the King, and by a fable and ſtory moſt artfully wrought up, he forced David ſolemnly to pronounce condemnation on himſelf. The ſtory the Prophet told, was grave, forcible, affecting, inſinuating, and polite. It conveyed a moſt important meſſage, tenderly and delicately expreſſed. Bathſheba had juſt borne him a Son, and David was highly elated, in the midſt of his joy, when Nathan is introduced, he addreſſes the King with the following complaint.

Two

" Two men lived in the ſame Town, one poor, " and the other rich, he had herds and flocks in " abundance, but the poor man had not any " thing, ſave only one little ewe lamb, which he had " bought and nouriſhed, ſo that it grew up toge- " ther with him and with his children, it did eat " of his morſel, and drank of his cup, and lay in " his boſom, and was to him as a Daughter, and " there came to the rich man, a certain traveller, " and he begrudged to take of his own herd, and " of his own flock, to entertain his gueſt, but " took away the poor man's lamb, and provided " for the traveller." As the Lord lives, ſays " David, " The man who has done this, is worthy " of death, he ſhall reſtore the lamb four-fold, in " as much as he hath done this thing, and hath had " no compaſſion." And Nathan ſaid unto David, " Thou art the man." Uriah the Hittite, thou haſt ſmote with the ſword, and haſt taken his wife, to be thy wife, and haſt ſlain him by the hands of the children of Ammon.

The Prophet now pronounces a heavy judg- ment upon David and his family.

The dreadful ſentence roufed the conſcience of the King, and from full conviction, he cries out aloud, " I have ſinned againſt the Lord."

Nathan

Nathan inſtantly replied: "The Lord hath put "away thy ſin. Thou ſhalt not die, but the "Son born unto thee, he ſhall ſurely die."

Upon this, the Prophet withdrew, and left the Palace. David greatly humbled himſelf, he faſted, he lay all night upon the ground, he acknowledges the greatneſs of his offences, and he moſt devoutly prays to be forgiven, to be reſtored to the favour of God, and that his little infant might be ſpared. This laſt requeſt was very ſpeedily denied him, and the child died on the ſeventh day, his ſervants ſeeing his diſtreſs, ſtill proſtrate on the ground, were afraid to tell him; he might be more miſerable and inconſolable; but ſeeing a buſtle, the King enquired, and as ſoon as knew it, he aroſe from the earth, waſhed and anointed himſelf, put off his mourning dreſs, went to the Tabernacle where the Ark was depoſited, he there devoutly worſhipped God, and then returned home, ordered his table to be ſpread, and refreſhed himſelf.

The ſervants expreſſing their ſurprize, David told them, that ſince the child was dead, his faſting could be of no avail, he muſt follow the child, it could never return to him.

Bathſheba

Bathſheba bore him another Son, and God was pleaſed to bleſs him from his earlieſt infancy, he called his name Solomon, and Nathan the Prophet, was appointed his tutor. The ſiege of Rabbah went on proſperouſly, the Ammonites were reduced to very great extremities, by cutting off the ſupplies of water and proviſions, a famine enſued in the City.

Joab, at this time, forwarded his diſpatches to Jeruſalem, and informed the King of the diſtreſs of the Ammonites, and the nearneſs of their ſurrender, and requeſted the honour of his Majeſtty's coming in perſon to the camp, that the glory of the conqueſt might be aſcribed to him. David commended the duty and fidelity of his General, aſſembled his guards, and haſtened with them to the ſiege, the City was ſoon taken, the ſoldiers had leave given them to plunder it, and David himſelf took poſſeſſion of the King's crown, valued at a talent of gold, and there was ſet in the middle of it, a Sardonyx ſtone of great beauty and luſtre.

Ever after, enthroned in ſtate, David always wore this crown. He put all the inhabitants of Rabbah to the ſword, with the like ſeverity, he treated their other Cities, and he carried all the rich ſpoils, he had taken, back with him in triumph to Jeruſalem.

The loſs of David's little Son, was the beginning only of family troubles, another affliction ſoon followed; his Son Amnon's baſe, treacherous, infamous lewdneſs, and violence with his own half ſiſter, is now the cauſe of very fatal miſchief, and great diſtreſs.

After Amnon, had cunningly contrived her ruin, and perpetrated all his baſeneſs, the Prince appears highly diſguſted, moſt cruelly inſults her, and turns her out of doors into the ſtreet: Tamar covered with ſhame, rends her Princely robe, in ſackcloth, and with aſhes on her head, ſhe goes directly to the houſe of her brother Abſalom, who very kindly received her, and comforted her, by the tendereſt and moſt affectionate treatment, uſing every ſoothing means to alleviate her ſorrow, and ſhe in this diſconſolate ſituation, ſtaid in his houſe two whole years, without ever ſeeing, or being ſeen, by any body whatever.

David was very angry, and moſt exceedingly diſtreſſed, he too plainly ſaw the threatenings of God, by the Prophet Nathan, were actually taking place, Amnon was his eldeſt Son, a favourite with his Father, and in his anger and high reſentment, he was very unwilling to paſs ſentence, and take away the life of his Son, but Abſalom (who was own brother both by father and mother)

was

was over-come by his violent diſguſt, and hatred to Amnon, and was watching every opportunity, how he might ſecretly revenge the injury. Two years were now elapſed, and Abſalom propoſed taking a journey into the country, and ſhear his ſheep, at that time it was always uſual to make a feaſt, and he invited all his family. to his eſtate at Baal-hazor, to partake of it. David excuſed himſelf, unwilling to put his Son to a large expence on his account, but all his children were invited, and he freely gave them leave; and alſo Amnon was permitted to accompany them.

It was at this feaſt, Abſalom gave orders to his ſervants, to keep their eye upon his brother Amnon, and when they ſhould ſee him elated and merry with wine, they were to ruſh upon him and ſlay him. Abſalom's ſervants obeyed their maſter, and his brothers, ſeeing ſo tragical an action, were very terribly alarmed, and every moment expected a like violence might be intended for each of them, they therefore ran to their horſes, mounted them as faſt as poſſible, and rode full ſpeed back to Jeruſalem.

On the very firſt alarm of this aſſaſſination, a meſſenger had poſted to David, and he reported that all his ſons were killed, overwhelmed with the deepeſt horror and anxiety, the King rent his garments,

ments, lay proſtrate on the earth, venting and breathing out his grief in the bittereſt ſighs and lamentations, while in this poſture and ſore diſtreſs, the noiſe and buſtle of horſes were heard, his Sons arrived, the Father riſes, runs out to meet them in a flood of tears, David wept, the Sons too wept bitterly, they for their brother, and David for his Son.

Abſalom fled to Talmai, to the King of Geſhur, and he continued at the Court of his Grand-father three years; at this time David's fond and affectionate diſpoſition began to relent, he regreted his abſence, and his baniſhment, he commiſſioned Joab, his General, to bring back his Son, and ſent him for that purpoſe to Geſhur; Abſalom returned with Joab, but before he could enter the City, David ordered him to his own houſe, and he confined him there two years. Abſalom then grew very impatient under his confinement, he held a conference with Joab, and urged him with great earneſtneſs to intercede with his Father, for his reconciliation and liberty. The General, for ſome reaſons, put him off from time to time, and neglected making any application on his behalf. Abſalom was a moſt beautiful perſon, the handſomeſt man in all the Kingdom, and he now thought himſelf Heir to the crown, and during ſo long an abſence and confinement,

was

was fearful leſt ſome deviſe might be forming againſt his ſucceſſion. He therefore repeatedly with great zeal, renewed his requeſt to Joab, and at length vexed and ſadly diſappointed at his indifference, the Prince grew quite warm, and he ordered his ſervants to ſet fire to a field of ripe corn, belonging to the General, and burn it all up. Joab inſtantly ran to Abſalom's houſe, and enquired the cauſe of this miſchief and devaſtation, Abſalom ſternly reproved his omiſſion and long delay, and reaſons with him on his ſufferings and confinement. He was even happier out of the Kingdom and at Geſhur; to be near his Father, and never ſee his Father, nor be forgiven, grew every day, more and more inſufferable. Joab was now in earneſt to apply in his behalf, he requeſted an audience, he won upon the affections of David, and obtained leave to bring him to the Palace. Abſalom fell proſtrate before his Father, with dutiful ſubmiſſion and reverence he prayed to be forgiven, David inſtantly held out his hand, raiſed him up himſelf, and moſt cordially embraced him, and reſtored him to his affection and favour.

Abſalom now took upon him great ſtate and magnificence; he was Heir apparent to the Crown, David's eldeſt Son, and he built him a ſtate equi-

page, encreaſed the number of his horſes, and enlarged his ſtables, was attended with a body-guard of fifty men, and they marched in ſtate before him, whenever he appeared in publick.

Very early in the morning, it was always the cuſtom at the Palace to preſent petitions, for the People to attend and make their complaints, and lay their grievances before the Judges, Abſalom roſe early, went to the Palace, placed himſelf near the gate at the entrance, familiarly converſed with all who reſorted thither, he enquired their buſineſs, lamented their waiting, inſinuated himſelf into their good graces, threw out ſome ſuſpicion, ſome diſtant hints to leſſen their good opinion of the ſkill, the judgment, and even the integrity of the Judges, the King's Council, and the Magiſtrates. Day after day, he thus moſt aſſiduouſly ingratiates himſelf, winds himſelf into their favour, becomes more and more popular, a friend of the People, a redreſſer of their grievances, aſſumes the politeſt and moſt winning carriage, a highly pleaſing perſon, the moſt elegant and accompliſhed figure at Court. Abſalom lamented with great concern, he was not admitted to ſit as Judge, to hear all their complaints, and decide himſelf in their favour, thus tacitly reproaching

proaching his Father, the Judges, and the Government.

When he was addreſſed as a Prince, and homage was paid him, moſt courteouſly he takes them by the hand, embraces them, in token of affection he kiſſes them, inſinuates himſelf into their eſteem, and thus aims at weakening their loyalty, and undermining the good Government of his Father.

Numbers were now in the intereſt of the Prince, ſuch conduct made him many friends, he is highly ſpoken of, and is ſecretly attempting to ſecure the Crown, by the moſt unnatural and impious rebellion againſt his Father, endangering his life, and plundering his Crown. All his ſchemes are deeply laid, and Achitrophel, David's firſt Counſellor, a man of deep cunning, and conſummate policy, offered him his ſervices, and wonderfully encouraged him. It was under the maſk of piety, Abſalom firſt concealed his treaſon. When he was in Syria, and had taken refuge at Geſhur, the Court of his Grand-father, he offered up a ſolemn vow, if it ſhould pleaſe God to bring him back to Jeruſalem, and reconcile him to his Father's love, he would offer upon the Altar at Hebron, a moſt devout thankſgiving and ſacrifice; the Prince equeſted an audience of the King, and duti-

fully aſked his permiſſion to go thither, and perform his vow, it was the place of his Nativity, and the Altar, and the high place for ſacrifice were yet ſtanding, and in daily uſe. David not in the leaſt ſuſpecting any treaſonable intentions or diſloyalty, commended the piety of his Son, and very readily aſſented to his propoſal, gave him his bleſſing, and wiſhed him proſperity.

When theſe religious ſacrifices were performed, there was uſually a grand feſtival, and Abſalom invited two hundred of the principal inhabitants, the moſt reſpectable of the People, to meet him at Hebron, to grace the ſolemnities, and partake of the entertainment; after this he diſpatched his emiſſaries, into all the principal towns on the road, and a ſelect number of thoſe he could truſt, were ordered to ſtay, in a ſtill and private manner in every one of them; on a ſignal which ſhould be given, his little party ſhould ſound the trumpets, aſſemble the People, and publickly proclaim him, King of Iſrael. They were then directed to collect and enliſt into their party, all the Forces they poſſibly could, and repair with them all to his ſtandard at Hebron. His plans thus adjuſted, Abſalom ſet out on his journey, many of his gueſts accompany him, and the reſt very innocently prepare for their meeting him

they

they all reſpectfully there paid him their homage and compliments, as Heir to the Crown, and eldeſt Son of the King. Theſe gueſts were People of character and great reſpectability, they were therefore of advantage to his cauſe, and inſpired with high ſpirits and courage, all his party and the conſpirators, who at leaſt thought them all friends to the Prince and his cauſe.

When Abſalom arrived at Hebron, he ſent a formal meſſage to Achitrophel, Preſident of the King's Council, and this great Counſellor immediately joined his party, and ſtamped a ſanction and importance on all their proceedings, a credit noticed by all the company.

Tranſactions thus publickly performed, ſoon became a general talk, the news was carried immediately to Jeruſalem, the report was all over the City, Abſalom had gained the hearts of the People, they had proclaimed him King, he was already on his march for the Capital.

David had very few forces in Jeruſalem, he had not ſoldiers enough to defend the City, the King haſtily ſummoned a council, and propoſed to them, leaving inſtantly his Palace, and retiring to a diſtance from his Capital, as the only means of ſafety left him, in order to avoid his, and his family's

family's falling, into the hands of the Rebels, who already on the march, were approaching the City, and expected ſuddenly to enter it, they (in the hour of diſtraction) might put the inhabitants to the ſword, ravage and plunder all his People.

The King's Council were intimidated, they profeſſed the higheſt reſpect, love, and loyalty to his Majeſty, and a determined reſolution to follow him every where.

David collected all his houſehold, his wives, and his children, and his ſervants, they all on foot inſtantly ſet out, his Nobles, his Friends, and a great number of Citizens accompany him, all his body-guards, and what forces he could ſo ſuddenly raiſe followed him, he left in his Palace only ten women, his concubines, and they were left in charge of every thing. His ſix hundred faithful ſoldiers who had travelled with him from Gath, marched in the front, they all kept moving forwards, until they had gained a ſafe diſtance, where they might prudently ſtop, to receive his diſpatches, and hear of every thing, now about to happen at Jeruſalem.

After this refreſhment and firſt halt, the King ordered them on, over the Brook Kedron, his children, and little ones moved firſt, and then followed

followed the ſoldiers, his Nobles, his Friends, their Attendants and his Wives, laſt of all David himſelf paſſed over, and they all took their rout towards the Wilderneſs, amidſt the moſt affectionate lamentations of his People, for their brave and moſt excellent Prince, thus piteouſly and ignominiouſly drove into exile, by his ungrateful, and moſt unnatural Son. Zadoc and Abiathar, the two High-Prieſts, and their Prieſts, and the Levites here overtook him, and they had carefully brought with them the Ark, the emblem of the Divine preſence, but David directed them to return back with it.

" God is every where preſent, ſhould God " reject me I ſubmit, let Him do to me as " ſeemeth Him good."

Affliction with dignity and manly fortitude, a humiliation ſweetened by hope and truſt in his God. Abiathar one of the High-Prieſts, in order to forward the ſafety and eſcape of many more of his friends, was already gone back, and had paſſed over the Brook, when on looking behind, he ſaw at a diſtance Zadoc, the Prieſts, and the Levites bringing the Ark, and repaſſing Kedron. David had held a converſation with the High-Prieſt, prudentially and politicly told him, you are a Seer, a wiſe and intelligent man, do go quietly back

back to Jeruſalem, and I pray God to protect and bleſs you, let your two Sons accompany you, they will be truſty friends, you now perfectly well know my rout, ſend me word of all that paſſes in the City. Both the High-Prieſts continued at Jeruſalem, until the rebellion was entirely ſuppreſſed. The King having thus confidentially ſettled his mode of intelligence, purſued his march towards the Wilderneſs, and aſcended the hill to Mount Olivet; and it was here he ſuffered ſorely from his great fatigue, a ſenſe of his danger, the fearful apprehenſion of the diſpleaſure of God, and from the unnatural unaffectionate conduct of a Son, he moſt tenderly loved. David's very heart was pierced, and his tears found vent and overwhelmed his eyes. He travelled on a mourning penitent, his head covered, and bare-footed, his attendants, in proof of their love and very tender concern, followed his example, and they very heartily, and grievouſly ſorrowed with him. A meſſenger here overtook them, and came running with the news, that his firſt counſel, and wiſe friend Achitrophel, had joined the conſpirators; David well knowing his abilities, his cunning and deep policy, was greatly alarmed and diſtreſſed.

On the perfidy and treaſon of this unnatural friend and counſellor, David (ſome time after reflecting

flecting on his baſeneſs) compoſed the fifty fifth Pſalm. On the top of the Mount, the King was met by a very old and affectionate friend, Huſhai, and he had rent all his clothes, and put earth upon his head in token of ſorrow, and he would fain have accompanied David in his flight, but the King wiſely reflected, how very uſeful the ſervice of ſo faithful a friend, would be to him and his cauſe in Jeruſalem, and he informed him of the treaſon and perfidy of Achitrophel, over-perſuading him to return back and offer his ſervices to Abſalom, he might have it in his power to defeat and fruſtrate Achitrophel's deep policy, and treacherous deviſes againſt him. Huſhai yielded to the importunity of David, he immediately returned, and found Abſalom had already taken poſſeſſion both of the City and the Palace.

Going down the hill on the other ſide, David was overtaken by Ziba, the ſteward of Mephiboſheth, and he brought him on aſſes two hundred loaves, a great quantity of raiſons and ſummer fruit, and a caſk of wine, a ſeaſonable preſent, as they were juſt now entering the Wilderneſs, to refreſh all the travellers. David enquired of Ziba where his maſter was, and he anſwered at Jeruſalem, he was waiting in full expectation of being reſtored to the Throne. It was a very little

farther at Bahurim, that the King was met by Shimei, a relation of Saul's, and he followed after David with the moſt horrid curſes and imprecations, throwing great ſtones down the hill and moleſting him and his party; ſuch infamous and malicious inſult, enraged the King's Officers, and Abiſhai, one of his Generals, aſked permiſſion to go and take his head off, David very mildly reaſoned with him, "Behold my own Son ſeeketh "my life, how much more this Benjamite." Such meekneſs and forbearance, made Shimei more inſolent. and he kept at a very ſhort diſtance, pelting him with ſtones, and clouding him with duſt. David ſtill purſued his march, and he entered the Town of Bahurim, in the tribe of Ephraim, and he halted, and here refreſhed his family and all his People, wearied out with ſo very long and haſty a journey.

Abſalom and his rebel Army were all ſettled, carouſing and rejoicing in Jeruſalem, Achitrophel his firſt favourite and prime Miniſter. Among other Officers of State, Huſhai came to Court, and paid his compliments to the young Prince, "God "ſave the King." Abſalom with unparalleled rudeneſs was very ſeverely ſatirical upon him, and ſcornfully aſked, is this your kindneſs to your old friend? why wenteſt thou not with thy friend? and

and Huſhai anſwered, No, whomſoever the Lord, the Army, and Iſrael chuſe, him will I ſerve. As I have ſerved thy Father, ſo will I ſerve Thee. The Frankneſs, and well-known fidelity of Huſhai, inſtantly procured him a Station and appointment at Court.

Abſalom now ſummoned a grand Council of all his Friends and Adherents, in order to adopt proper meaſures, to accompliſh and ſecure the Revolution in his favour, which had been ſo very ſucceſsfully begun. A very horrid and moſt dreadful part of the Prophets Prediction was now ripe for fulfilment; Nathan had told David, " I will take thy Wives, and I will " give them to thy Neighbour" to this abandoned and moſt execrable of all Meaſures, Abſalom was now adviſed by his Miniſter and favourite Counſellor Achitrophel, and he ſeemed to have in view, the baſe and moſt determined reſolution, of preventing hereby, all future reconciliation between Father and Son.

On the Houſe top, in the face of the Sun and in ſight of all Iſrael, Abſalom, without fear or ſhame, prepetrated even this Wickedneſs, this moſt horrid of all inceſts; and had he the leaſt decency or tenderneſs of conſcience, he would have ſhuddered at the thoughts of committing

mitting, even in the darkeſt and moſt ſecret retirement imaginable, what he had thus publickly and avowedly executed at noon Day.

The next advice of Achitrophel, was not leſs horrid and impious, his plan and contrivance was, to murder his Father, and he offered himſelf to become his executioner. He would ſet out that very night with twelve thouſand choſen Men, and accompliſh this moſt bloody Deed, and the ſcheme he propoſed, was very likely indeed to have proved fatal to David. Huſhai's prudence and wiſe conduct prevented it. Abſalom highly delighted with Achitrophel's advice, and his zeal to ſerve him, actually ſigned his orders to ſet off, but he firſt ſent for Huſhai. (Huſhai, had already found means to forward the neceſſary information to David, directing him to change his route and make no delay whatever, fearing leaſt he might not be able to put a ſtop to the expedition, and inſtant march of Achitrophel.) Huſhai's opinion was wiſely calculated to ſooth the vanity and ambition of the young Prince, and it luckily met the approbation of the whole Council, though perhaps almoſt the only one, which could have ſaved the life of David, give him time to refreſh his harraſſed followers, and recover them from the ſore alarm and conſternation. " The Counſel of Achitrophel

is

is not good on the preſent occaſion, Thy Father and his Men, are Men of Valour and experience, they are not likely to be ſurprized, probably they had fortified themſelves in ſtrong holds, Caverns, and among Rocks. His advice to his Majeſty was, to call together all Iſrael, from Dan to Beer-ſheba, and pour in upon David and his Army ſo numerous a body of troops, as would put it out of the power of any of them to eſcape.

Providence permitted the young Prince, and all his Council, to be blinded by this very extraordinary Speech. Achitrophel was the only Perſon who perceived the drift and dangerous conſequence of it; moſt horribly chagrined and mortified that the advice of Huſhai ſhould be perferred before his, he ordered his Aſs to be ſaddled, and rode home full ſpeed, he there ſat himſelf down, made his own Will, ſettled all his affairs, and afterwards went out and hung himſelf.

Upon the information forwarded by Huſhai, David loſt not one moment, he with all his family, his attendants and army, at mid-night, croſſed over the River Jordan, and early the next morning arrived at Mehanaim, in the tribe of Gad, and here many of his friends reforted

to

to him, and they brought him plenty of Proviſion, ſupplied him with Tents, Couches, Utenſils and all neceſſaries.

Abſalom was ſoon informed of his Father's new route, and of his forces and ſtrength, he marched himſelf againſt him, with a formidable Army, and Amaſa was his Commander in Chief, they pitched their tents, and formed a large encampment in the land of Gilead.

David aſſembled his troops and divided them into three bodies, he gave the command of them to Joab, and his two Brothers. David propoſed to be himſelf their General, but this, all his friends moſt ſtrenuouſly oppoſed, alledging, that his enemy would much perfer his ſingle death, to the deſtruction of his whole Army. David therefore with a ſmall reinforcement ſtayed at Mehanaim, and he anxiouſly gave, in perſon, ſtrict charge to all his Officers, and in hearing of all his men, that they ſhould be very careful and tender, reſpecting the life of his Son. In the Foreſt of Ephraim a very fierce and bloody battle was fought, the Rebel Army were totally routed, twenty thouſand men were ſlain in the fight, numbers more in the wood flying and attempting their eſcape. Abſalom purſued by a party of royaliſts fled with full ſpeed upon his mule through the

the wood, his fine buſhy hair entangled in the branches of an oak, and the Mule ran from under him, and left the young Prince hanging by his hair, which was very thick, and immoderately luxuriant. A ſoldier haſtily ran and told Joab, upon which he ſaid to him, why did you not ſmite him, I would have given thee fifty ſhekels of ſilver, and a girdle (a Captain's Commiſſion;) the man anſwered him, hadſt thou offered me two thouſand, I would not, after that my Lord, the King had ſo ſtrictly charged, and entreated me to ſpare the young man. Joab ſaid, it was now no time to parly, where is the Prince? and he commanded him to ſhew him the ſpot, Joab inſtantly ſtruck a javelin into his heart, ten of his guards now cut down the body, threw it into an adjacent pit, and covered it over with a heap of ſtones, Joab ſounded a retreat, recalled his ſoldiers from the purſuit, and put an end to the effuſion of blood. The rebel Army thus diſperſed, every man fled to his own home.

At the gate of Mehanaim, David in great anxiety, moſt impatiently waited the event of the battle, and he was diſtreſsfully ſolicitous for the ſafety of his Son, the watchman on the high Tower, cries out a meſſenger! a meſſenger! and David ſays, he bringeth good news, again the watchmen cries out, I ſpy another! and David

again

again replies, he bringeth good tidings; the watchman now ſays, it is Ahimaaz Son of Zadoc and the King was glad, a meſſenger ſays he, of joyful news; Ahimaaz now arrives and pays him homage, the battle is won, and David ſays, but my Son. Ahimaaz anſwers, he could only tell him of the victory, the Enemy was routed. The other meſſenger now enters, David tells him I have heard of the victory, where is my Son? Cuſhai anſwers, may the ſame fate be to thy enemies, as has now befallen thy Son; David went up to an upper chamber, the higheſt, moſt retired place in all the City, moſt bitterly bewailing the loſs of his Son, beating his breaſt, tearing his hair, renting his clothes, and crying aloud, O' my Son Abſalom, my Son, my Son Abſalom, would to God, I had died for thee! O' Abſalom my Son, my Son.

Joab, and the Army, would not enter the City at the great Gate and in triumph as Conquerors, with countenances dejected, and eyes full of tears, they ſilently marched in, ſo ſorrowful, and more like captives were they all. David ſat mute, with a veil over his face, heavily ſobbing and unſeaſonably mourning over his Son, Joab foreſaw from ſuch a conduct, the moſt fatal conſequences, it was very likely indeed to occaſion a mutiny. So rough and hardy a Soldier, unaccuſtomed to the tender feelings of humanity and parental fondneſs,

went

went rudely up to him, and in terms imperious, inſolent and threatening, upbraided the King with ingratitude, reaſoned with him (at a ſeaſon like this) on the ill conſequences of ſuch a publick effuſion of ſorrow and affection, forced him out of his retirement, obliged him to come forwards, and led him to his People, " if you perſiſt, I will give " your Kingdom to another, I will cauſe your " Army to revolt. Dry up your tears, ſhew your- " ſelf at the Gate, aſſume all the cheerfulneſs in " your power".

On this threatening ſpeech of his General, the King reſumed his wonted care for his People, he came forwards, ſat down at the gate in all his royal robes, and they all ſaluted him, and came reſpectfully to pay him homage. All his Officers, Soldiers and People, even thoſe who had ſided with Abſalom, crouded in, and were now moſt ambitious to ſhew him affection, duty, and reſpect.

ESSAY XI

CONCLUSION OF THE LIFE AND REIGN OF DAVID.

CONTAINING

His return to Jeruſalem—Meſſage to Amaſa the Rebel General—Meeting with Shimei, Ziba, and good old Barzillai—Murder of Amaſa by Joab—Revolt under Sheba—Quelled by Joab—Account of a Famine—Put a ſtop to by what—Motherly affection of Rizpah—New Wars with the Philiſtines—David's numbering the People—His Choice out of three Puniſhments—Prefers the Peſtilence—David's prayer puts a ſtop to it—Purchaſe of Araunah's Threſhing floor—Adonijah's Rebellion—Solomon proclaimed—David's gift towards the Temple—Munificence of the People—David's Advice to Solomon—Recommendation of the Sons of Barzillai—His converſation reſpecting Joab and Shimei—David's Death—His Sepulchre—Character.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION OF THE

LIFE AND REIGN

OF

DAVID.

WHEN David saw the readineſs of the Tribes and his People, to conduct him back to his Capital, he forwarded an expreſs to Zadoc and Abiathar, his High-Prieſts, to aſſemble the Chiefs and Elders of Judah, and haſten with them, to accompany him home to his Palace, and he ſent a truſty Officer with an offer to Amaſa, the rebel General, that in caſe he would take the Oaths of Allegiance, loyally and amicably

bly join his Troops, he would appoint him his Commander in Chief, and General over all his Forces, and as he was a Relation, David perſuaſively added " Say ye to Amaſa, art thou not of my bone, and of my fleſh?" This Step was an Act of great Prudence, for Amaſa had garriſoned Jeruſalem, with a large body of Troops, and was already fled back thither with a ſtrong and powerful re-inforcement.

Hitherto, all the Tribes had ambitiouſly ſtrove to ſhew their Loyalty, and obliterate the remembrance of their defection, by the moſt reſpectful homage, and the moſt dutiful expreſſions of Submiſſion. Before the King arrived at the banks of Jordan, Shimei, who had ſo inſultingly perſecuted him in his flight, here met him at the head of a thouſand Benjamites, Shimei fell proſtrate on the Ground, paying him the moſt ſubmiſſive homage, praying his life, and ſueing for pardon and forgiveneſs. Abiſhai, a General Officer, who had been ſo provoked by his former inſult, baſeneſs, and infamy, reminds David of Shimei's ſhameful blaſphemy and perſecution, and aſks if he ſhould not die, but David unwilling to eclipſe the general joy, by inflicting any puniſhment, generouſly pardoned Shimei, " Verily thou " ſhalt not die, and David confirmed it with an " Oath." A very little farther, Ziba, attended by his fifteen Sons, and a train of twenty ſervants

vants met the King, and they all on the road fell down and paid him homage; Ziba, the ſteward of Mephiboſheth, had by a falſe repreſentation, artfully leſſened David's good opinion of his maſter, and by that cunning and ſlander, he had obtained a grant of his eſtates, Ziba now comes eagerly to congratulate the King on his return and reſtoration. Good old Barzillai, at the age of four-ſcore, came alſo to expreſs his great joy, reſpectfully accompanied him over Jordan, and he there dutifully and moſt affectionately took his laſt farewel. David invited him to Jeruſalem, but the good old man, incapable himſelf of enjoying, the pleaſures of a Court, requeſted his Majeſty would beſtow ſuch honours on his Son, upon which, Chimham being introduced, was moſt graciouſly noticed by the King, and invited to the Palace. David embraced Barzillai, he kiſſed his old friend, and they parted in tears.

The King's meſſage to Zadoc and Abiathar, his High-Prieſts, to aſſemble the Elders of Judah, and come in a body to meet him, excited ſome jealouſy between the men of Judah, and the men of Iſrael, the obſtinacy of the former exaſperated the other Tribes, and they thought themſelves ſlighted by the diſtinction paid to Judah; this occaſioned a tumult and a revolt, one Sheba, Abſalom's Captain, a factious Benjamite, cried out aloud, " We have no part in David! no in-

" heritance

" heritance in the Son of Jeſſe! —To your tents " O' Iſrael!"—Judah perſiſted in its loyalty, and they conducted David ſafe to Jeruſalem. As ſoon as he arrived, he commanded Amaſa, his new General, to muſter up his Army, and give him an account of their numbers in three days. Amaſa was not quite ſo ſoon prepared, and David diſpatched Abiſhai, with all the troops he had, to quell this new inſurrection, Abiſhai immediately ſet out accompanied by his Brother Joab, and with ſuch Forces, as he alſo could collect, when they were come as far as the ſtone of Gibeon, a general place of rendezvous, Amaſa and his men overtook them, and Amaſa there formally took upon him, the Command of the whole Army. Joab, all on fire, ſtifles his riſing choler, and going up (as was uſual) to ſalute Amaſa, with congratulations and friendſhip, he took him by the beard, as if he was going to kiſs him, but Joab inſtantly ran him through the body with his ſword, and his bowels guſhed out at the wound. Joab left him thus wallowing in his blood, and proceeded on his way with Abiſhai in ſearch of Sheba, placing a ſervant by the body, commanding him to tell his ſoldiers, as they came up, that all of them who were friends to David, ſhould inſtantly repair to the ſtandard of Joab.

The

The guard ſet over the body, ſeeing the ſoldiery, ſhocked at ſo ghaſtly and horrid a ſpectacle, removed the General's corpſe into a field, and covered it over, after which the whole Army peaceably followed Joab.

Sheba and his little Army had ſhut themſelves up in the Town of Abel, ſituated in the Tribe of Manaſſeh, Joab ſurrounded it with his troops, regularly laid ſiege to it, and began battering down the Suburbs. A wiſe and prudent woman, an inhabitreſs of Abel, ſent a meſſage requeſting to ſpeak with the General, and ſhe advanced forwards and took her ſtand upon the Town Wall, Joab met her, and a parley here commenced. The inhabitants of Abel had been always diſtinguiſhingly loyal, they had committed no one offence, were peaceable and dutiful ſubjects; Joab replied, I mean no harm to you, or your City, to the Town itſelf, I intend no hoſtility. The Magiſtrates had harboured a Rebel, one Sheba, Son of Bichri, and him he would have, the woman cried out, hear the words of thy handmaid; ſee now, the head of Sheba, ſhall be thrown to thee over the wall. She aſſembled the Elders and Magiſtrates, reported her conference with the General, and they immediately ordered Sheba's head to be thrown over the City Wall to Joab. He blew the trumpets, ſounded a retreat, ſent

every

every man to his tent to collect his baggage, and Joab marched his Army back to Jeruſalem.

While this rebellion was quelling, David remained at home, and amongſt his daily viſitors and courtiers, Mephiboſheth came to the Palace, and moſt joyfully congratulated his Majeſty on his return. Ziba's perfidious anſwer to David, when he inquired of him after his maſter, had greatly leſſened him in the good opinion of the King, and he appeared very diſtant and ſhy when he met him. The Prince was ſadly diſtreſſed, he convinced him of his innocence, aſſured him of his grateful, and moſt inviolable attachment, exculpated his character, and David was at laſt ſatisfied and pleaſed; but the King reſtored him only one half of his eſtates notwithſtanding, and admitted Ziba, to retain the remainder, though he had ſo perfidiouſly acquired it. At parting, Mephiboſheth took a very polite and affectionate leave of David, " Since I am ſo happy, as to ſee " my Lord the King return in peace again to his " houſe, let Ziba take all my eſtates."

Joab's ſucceſs, at once quaſhed and put an end to a very dangerous revolt, and reſtored a general tranquillity throughout all the Kingdom. Joab was again conſtituted Commander in Chief over all the Forces of Iſrael. Benaiah, Captain

of

of his Guard. Adoram Treaſurer. Jehoſophat, Recorder. Zadoc and Abiathar High-Prieſts, Sheva Secretary of State, and Izra the Iarite ſucceeded Achitrophel as Preſident of the Council. David now ſettled his houſehold, and he ordered the ten women, his concubines, inceſtuouſly violated by Abſalom, a table and ſuitable apartments, where they were kept in cloſe confinement, honourably maintained as in a ſtate of widowhood.

David had born to him ſeventeen Sons, and he had an Army of three hundred thouſand Warriors, who did duty monthly by rotation, during a time of Peace, but in time of War they were all in Arms.

Two years after his return to Jeruſalem, a Famine began, and it laſted three years. The want of the uſual rains, the violence of the heat and drought, were at firſt ſuppoſed to be very natural cauſes of the diſtreſs, but its very long continuance was ſo extraordinary, that David thought it neceſſary to enquire of the Lord reſpecting it, and by every means in his power, leſſen and avert the calamity; indeed it was now generally believed to be a viſitation from God, and a token of his diſpleaſure. The King's very proper and dutiful inquiry, was immediately and moſt ex-

preſsly anſwered. Saul and his bloody houſe, had impiouſly ſlain the Gibeonites. David inſtantly ſent to know, what ſatisfaction it was, they required, for the wrong that had been done them. The Gibeonites ſent back for anſwer, neither gold, ſilver, nor valuables, but ſeven Males of the family of Saul, whom (they informed his Majeſty) they would immediately put to death.

David delivered up to them two Sons of Saul by Rizpah his Concubine, and the five Sons of Michal, the Daughter of Saul, which ſhe bore to Ariel, the Son of Barzillai the Meholathite. Soon after their arrival in the Country, they were all ſeven, publickly executed in Gibeah of Saul, to make their puniſhment more notorious and ſhameful. The rains and uſual ſhowers now returned and the famine entirely ceaſed.

Poor Rizpah accompanied her two unfortunate Sons to Gibeah, ſhe witneſſed herſelf their execution, and near the gibbet on which they were hung, ſhe erected a tent, and would never leave the place, but kept watching their bodies, to prevent their being torn or defaced by the birds or the beaſts. David on being told of her tender affection and moſt melancholy ſituation, ſent and ordered their bones to be brought away and buried in the Sepulchre of Kiſh, their Grandfather,

father, in the Tribe of Benjamin, and he had now alſo the aſhes of Saul and Jonathan, removed to the ſame Sepulchre.

Soon after this, David fought four ſucceſſive battles againſt the Philiſtines, it was in one of theſe, David had very near loſt his life by a Philiſtine Giant, he was in the very moment of running him through the body, when Abiſhai firſt ſheathed his ſword in the body of the Philiſtine. After this moſt merciful and providential eſcape, David did not appear in the field. The People dutifully ſwore unto David and made a league with him, not to go out in perſon any more. "Thou "art our Guide and our Glory, ſee that thou "quench not the light of Iſrael." And indeed, after theſe four engagements, the two Nations remained at Peace during the remainder of the Reign of David.

To perpetuate the memory of this very ſignal eſcape and deliverance, David compoſed that beautiful Ode, the eighteenth Pſalm.

He had not long enjoyed his new and peaceful ſettlement at home, before he iſſued out his orders for numbering the People; Joab in vain remonſtrated, and wicked as he was, repreſented how very diſpleaſing it would be to God. Are they not all my Lord's ſervants? why will he be

the cauſe of treſpaſs to Iſrael? David would be obeyed. Joab, and the Commiſſioners, ſet about this work moſt unwillingly, in hopes the King would ſee his error they delayed it all they could, nine months and twenty days they were employed about it, and then brought in their liſt, in which Benjamin and the Levites, were yet unnumbered.

Of fighting men of Iſrael, eight hundred thouſand, and of Judah, five hundred thouſand.

Before Joab and his Commiſſioners had made their return, David experienced ſome very evident tokens of the diſpleaſure of God, he was ſtruck with a lively ſenſe of his folly, and one night he expreſſed to his friends, the deepeſt remorſe and ſorrow for his conduct, and it was the very next morning after, that the Prophet Gad was ſent to him, and he named three different Judgments, God (he ſaid) had given David his choice. A ſeven years famine throughout the land—to be purſued by his enemies three months—or to ſuffer a three days peſtilence.

David ſeverely humbled, owned it a hard choice. he preferred the latter as the more equal puniſhment, under the more immediate execution of Almighty God. Seventy thouſand Iſraelites were deſtroyed, and it had juſt began to ſhew itſelf in Jeruſalem, when David's moſt earneſt prayer

and

and fervent ſupplications were heard—he looked up and beheld the Deſtroying Angel, the Miniſter of Vengeance, ſtanding at the thraſhing floor of Araunah a Prince of the Jebuſites, and David here addreſſed him in behalf of his innocent People, and tenderly and reverentially pleads with God to ſpare them, " Even I, it is I that have " ſinned, but as for theſe ſheep, what have they " done?" A very pathetic and moving expoſtulation, and he ſaw the Angel before him, with a drawn ſword commiſſioned to execute the judgment, and inflict even in Jeruſalem, the puniſhment the King had made choice of. David, now earneſtly intreated that the anger of God might only fall on himſelf, and on ſuch of his Nobles as had been his adviſers. In this moment of ſorrow and deſpair, while he was thus ſo tenderly and devoutly pleading, the Prophet Gad is again ſent to him, and he commanded him to erect an Altar on that very ſpot, where he had now ſo viſibly beheld the Deſtroying Angel. David haſted to the thraſhing floor, Araunah came out moſt reſpectfully to meet him, and when David propoſed buying it, he made him a generous offer of the floor, the thraſhing Oxen, and all the utenſils belonging to it. David was very ſenſible of his kindneſs, but told Araunah, it would ill become the King of Iſrael, to offer ſacrifices that were not his own, and Araunah ſold him the floor, for fifty

ſhekels

ſhekels of ſilver, and David inſtantly goes about raiſing an Altar there, and he offered up burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings upon it, and fire came down from Heaven and conſumed the victims, affording a happy proof, God was again reconciled to Iſrael.

This thraſhing floor ſtood on the Hill, where the moſt magnificent Temple of Solomon was afterwards built, encouraged by all theſe gracious tokens, of God's acceptance and approbation, David continued ever after to offer Sacrifice on this Altar.

" This is the houſe of the Lord God, the Altar " for the burnt-offering for Iſrael." Hereby conſecrating this place for the Temple, and its ſacred ſervice, the centre for the Publick Worſhip of all the Tribes of Iſrael. For this very purpoſe David bought the whole ground, and he gave for it ſix hundred ſhekels of Gold (ie) about five hundred and fifty pound.

David now ſeventy years of age, was viſibly declining very faſt, he loſt all his native heat and vigour, and no warmth of dreſs, nor any phyſical art whatever could reſtore it him. Adonijah his eldeſt Son, looked upon himſelf as already inveſted with royalty. He built him a moſt ſplendid

did equipage, was attended by a numerous body-guard, and with running footmen in great ſtate. David, affectionately fond of his children, viewed all indulgencies with pleaſure. Elated by the grandeur he had aſſumed, fearful and jealous of not aſcending the throne, Adonijah concerted with Joab, Commander in Chief, and Abiathar one of the High-Prieſts, and they aſſiſted him in forming a moſt treaſonable conſpiracy, he gained over to his party, all his Brothers but Solomon, and he bribed and ſeduced all his Father's ſervants, in great haſte the young Prince cauſed himſelf to be proclaimed, and invited all his party, many of the Officers of the Houſehold and the Elders and Magiſtrates to a ſumptuous feaſt, he had prepared at Zoheleth, in order to be publickly acknowledged, and all his friends and followers cried out, God ſave the King! God ſave King Adonijah!

Nathan the Prophet, Zadoc the High-Prieſt, and many Nobles and friends in the intereſt of Solomon, ſuſpecting ſtrongly his deſign, Nathan went to the Palace, and adviſed Bathſheba to go inſtantly, and inform the King, of this new conſpiracy and uſurpation, and remind him of his promiſe in favour of her Son, while ſhe was yet ſpeaking, Nathan haſtily enters the King's Apart-

ment

ment, and tells him of Adonijah's feaſt, and of their proceedings at Zoheleth.

David aſſumed all his dignity, he recovers all his vigour and reſolution. He ſummonſes his Nobles, all his Court, his Officers, and the Elders of Iſrael, and inſtantly proclaimed his Son Solomon King. Zadoc the High-Prieſt ſet him upon David's own mule, and led him to Gihon, a Fountain near Jeruſalem on the oppoſite ſide to that where Adonijah was gone, Solomon was anointed, and all Jeruſalem rent with the joyful acclamations, Long live King Solomon! God bleſs the King!

David's commands were executed with ſuch ſpeed, that Adonijah, and his party had not the leaſt ſuſpicion of it, until they were all alarmed by the general joy, and univerſal ſhouts throughout the City.

Jonathan, the Son of Abiathar the High-Prieſt, ran and give them an account of the whole Ceremony, and that every thing had been expreſsly done by his Majeſty's orders, the King himſelf (he ſaid) was in the higheſt ſpirits and joy imaginable. Such unexpected news ſtruck them all with amazement, and they all ſtole away, diſperſed themſelves, and fled with the utmoſt ſpeed. Adonijah took ſanctuary at the horns of the Altar.

Solomon

Solomon there ſent him word, if he behaved himſelf loyally, wiſely, and like an honeſt man, he would not hurt a hair of his head, but diſloyalty, now, would be inſtantly puniſhed with death. Adonijah came, he proſtrated himſelf before the new King, and Solomon commanded him to retire to his own houſe.

David finding his end drawing nigh, he aſſembled the Elders and Heads of all the Tribes, his Nobles, Generals and Officers, all his Prieſts and the Levites, and made them a long ſpeech, acquainting them with his wiſhes, and deſigns to have built a magnificent repoſitory for the Ark of God, but the Prophet had told him, that work was reſerved for the more peaceful Reign of his Son Solomon. It was (David ſaid) what he had much at heart, he had made great preparations for it, and laid up from time to time, immenſe treaſures, no leſs than three thouſand talents* of gold, and ſeven thouſand talents of pure ſilver, with proportionable quantities of copper, iron, and various materials, all of which, together with all the ſtately plans and models for the Temple, he now reſigned up to his Son, to be by him perfected and improved, as he, in his wiſdom ſhould direct.

* Three hundred ſeventy five pounds, a Jewiſh Talent.

David earneſtly requeſted the aſſiſtance of all his People, in ſo arduous an undertaking, and whoever of them were inclined to join him, and contribute towards ſo very expenſive an Edifice, might now bring in all their free will offerings, and depoſite them in the publick treaſury.

Such royal munificence, at ſuch a moment, and on ſo pious and ſolemn an occaſion, inſpired a ſpirit of benevolence, and genuine liberality throughout the whole aſſembly, his Nobles and his People, every one was ambitious to imitate a generoſity ſo royal and glorious. They were all delighted with the thoughts of the building, a repoſitory for the Ark, a Temple for the God of Iſrael, and they moſt freely brought in their contributions. A ſubſcription was inſtantly opened, and it amounted on the ſpot, to five thouſand talents and ten thouſand drams of gold; ten thouſand talents of ſilver; eighteen thouſand of braſs; and a hundred thouſand of iron; many ſubſcribed and brought in their valuables and jewels, and theſe were all paid in, to the royal treaſury.

The ſight of ſo much wealth and ſo very freely offered, revived the heart and ſoul of David, he broke out into extacy and a holy rapture, full of gratitude and piety to God, of love and pure affection to his Son and all his People, this was

followed

followed by devout and moſt ſolemn ſacrifices, and the higheſt acclamations of religious joy. The very next morning the King ordered one thouſand oxen, two thouſand ſheep and lambs, to be added to the daily oblations, and offered up in ſacrifice, with a vaſt profuſion of meat-offerings and drink-offerings, and he feaſted the whole company all that day with a royal munificence, worthy ſo great a Monarch and ſo good a Man.

An aſſembly of joy and gladneſs, a feaſt and a thankſgiving. The Government was at this meeting, ſo wiſely eſtabliſhed, and ſo nobly planned, it produced forty years uninterrupted proſperity and peace.

Solomon was now anointed a ſecond time by Zadoc, and he here received the homage of his Brethren, and of the Chiefs, Nobles, and Elders of Judah, and of all Iſrael. By ſound of trumpet they proclaimed him King, throughout all the Tribes, and Zadoc alone was conſtituted his High-Prieſt.

It was on this occaſion, David compoſed the ſeventy ſecond Pſalm. A grand Coronation Anthem.

The good old King now ſent for his Son Solomon, to impart to him his laſt inſtructions, and

pronounce his bleſſing. With dignity, and true piety, he devoutly preſſes upon his mind, the full aſſurance, that the gracious promiſes God had made to him, were all conditional, they would only accompany a faithful and religious obſervance of his laws.

" And thou Solomon my Son, know thou the " God of thy Fathers, and ſerve him with a perfect " heart, and with a willing mind, for the Lord " ſearcheth all hearts, and underſtandeth all the " imaginations of the thoughts, if thou ſeek him, " he will be found of thee, but if thou forſake him, " he will caſt thee off for ever. Take heed now, " for the Lord hath choſen thee to build a houſe " for the ſanctuary, be ſtrong, and do it."

David now affectionately recommended to him the family of his old friend Barzillai, " His Sons " are with you, let them eat at thy table.

The laſt charge he gave his Son, related to two State Priſoners, he poſitively condemned and ordered the execution of a murderer, who had too much influence and power for him to puniſh, and Solomon wiſely executed his commiſſion immediately on Joab, in a manner worthy a juſt, reſolute, and a great Prince. Moſt reaſonably Joab expected no leſs puniſhment than death, he looked for aſſaſſination, he fled to the horns of the Altar, the place of refuge for the murderer,

Benaiah

Benaiah, Captain of the guards, was ſent to him and Solomon commanded him to ſlay him, on the ſpot. Shimei was the other, the inſulting Benjamite who had ſo rudely perſecuted him in his flight, when under the deepeſt affliction, and David tells his Son, Shimei deſerves to die for his horrid curſes, imprecations and cruelty, but Shimei acknowledged his crime ſubmiſſively, and I ſealed his pardon with an oath. My Son, you are under no obligation. Shimei was commanded to keep within the City gates, and was told, he would commit an act of high treaſon, whenever he was ſeen beyond them.

Some years after, Shimei purſuing two ſervants who had run away, was found riding in the Country, immediately on his return, Shimei was put to death.

Soon after this, his laſt converſation, with Solomon, full of days and honours, David died, aged ſeventy, he was the oldeſt King, that ever ſat on the Iſraelitiſh Throne, he had reigned ſeven years in Hebron over Judah, and three-and-thirty years, over all the twelve Tribes of Iſrael.

David was buried in a ſtately Sepulchre, very magnificent and curious, cut out of a ſolid marble rock, containing many ſpacious apartments, one within another, and the further one was divided into nitches, cut into the ſolid ſtone, each nitch

deſigned

deſigned for one coffin, the peaceful and ſilent reſidence for the Kings of Iſrael.

The Zeal, Piety, and Penitence of David, are highly celebrated and exemplary. His character as a Prophet, lives for ever—and he ſtands diſtinguiſhingly exalted above all the Patriarchs, by the promiſe of the Meſſiah, affixed to his poſterity.

His Modeſty, Prudence, Magnanimity, and Valour, gained him love, eſteem, veneration, honour.

A Brave and Fortunate Commander in the field, of ſtrict integrity, moderation, and candour. He loſt no Battle. He beſieged no City, he did not Conquer.

In his Court of Judicature, David ſat Judge, paſſing ſentence with wiſdom, Equity, and Mercy.

Over-indulgent to his Children, injuriouſly partial even to their vanity, and their follies.

A very tender, faithful, and moſt affectionate friend.

He had acquired the politeſt accompliſhments, a maſter of muſic, the richeſt ſublimeſt vein of Poetry, his praiſes and thankſgivings are a flame of Devotion, his penitential hymns, heart-piercing,

and

and moſt exquiſitely painful; forgiven of God, he never felt reconciled to himſelf; a ſage philoſophic inquirer, graceful and highly pleaſing in his Perſon, amiable, generous, and wiſe.

ESSAY

ESSAY XII.

ON THE

LIFE AND REIGN

OF

KING SOLOMON.

BY the expreſs orders and declaration of David, the free choice of the People, their Elders Rulers and Heads, at the appointment and approbation of God, Solomon an amiable young Prince at the age of eighteen, aſcended the Throne of Iſrael.

It

It was cuſtomary at the commencement of a new Reign, for People of all ranks and orders to come crowding to the Palace, with ſhouts and the loudeſt acclamations, expreſſing their joy, and paying their homage. Long live the King! May the King live for ever! The bleſſings and adulations and hearty welcome of his People.

Under many fearful apprehenſions, as well as under the feelings of diſappointment, Adonijah had paid his dutiful and reſpectful homage, and he had at that time obtained a conditional aſſurance of ſafety. No one ſhould hurt a hair of his head while he continued loyal, after which interview, he had been directed to go home to his own houſe.

The day following Adonijah ſent a Meſſage to the Palace, and humbly requeſted an Audience of the Queen Mother. Bathſheba received his viſit moſt reſpectfully, and with a winning courteſy Adonijah paid her homage. The Queen pleaſed with his graceful ſubmiſſion, inquired if he had any thing to diſcloſe, ſhe poſſibly might have it in her power to ſerve him, and aſſuredly ſhe would. So polite and very kind a reception pleaſingly gratified and encouraged the Prince, with ſweet ſimplicity, and openneſs he told her, as he was the Eldeſt Son, and had the voice of the People, or

at leaſt he could have gained it, no doubt he had looked upon himſelf as Heir to the Crown of Iſrael, but as it was now otherways ordered, and the Government diſpoſed of, to his Brother, he told her Majeſty, he would bring his mind to be ſatisfied with the preſent ſettlement. There was one thing which would much contribute to his domeſtic happineſs, and he prayed the Queen to uſe her intereſt with her Son, and procure him leave to marry Abiſhag, a highly celebrated beauty, who by the advice of the King's Phyſicians had been introduced to David, and it is ſuppoſed was married to him, ſome ſhort time before his death.

Bathſheba, pleaſed her Son's Rival would be ſo eaſily ſatisfied, made not the leaſt heſitation at promiſſing him her influence and intereſt. She was very ſure (ſhe ſaid) her Son would be glad of an opportunity of obliging his Brother, and ſhe knew he would the more readily aſſent, as ſhe would, moſt earneſtly join, in his requeſt and petition.

Adonijah reſpectfully withdrew, much pleaſed with his viſit, and in full expectation of marrying this very beautiful Shunammite.

Bathſheba went immediately to the King's apartment, ſhe was graciouſly received with all the duty

duty and reſpect, due to a Mother and a Queen. Solomon affectionately embraced her, led her to his bed-chamber, where there was a Royal Throne, on which he ſeated himſelf, and on his right hand he ordered a chair for his Mother, immediately on being ſeated, my Son (ſays ſhe) grant me one petition, I truſt my Son, you will not refuſe me this my firſt requeſt. Solomon interrupted her, a Mother ſhould be always, and moſt dutifully obeyed, and he deſires ſhe would command him, upon which the Queen names the purport of her viſit, and requeſted him to give Abiſhag in Wife to Adonijah. The King's countenance took fire. Why does not my Brother aſk of me the Kingdom? he would ſtrengthen his intereſt by making Joab his Commander in Chief, and Abiathar his High-Prieſt. With ſuch ambition, and ſo very early ſhewn, Solomon was exceeding angry, and as ſoon as he had diſmiſſed his Mother, he iſſued out immediate orders for the execution of Adonijah, and the King ſent Benaiah, the Captain of his Guard, to perform it.

Solomon, enthroned, ordered into Court Abiathar the High-Prieſt, and he thus addreſſed him. On account of your troubles under David my Father, and the zeal and earneſtneſs you ſhewed, in bringing hither the Ark, I now grant you a reprieve from death, your entering into the

intereſts

intereſts of my Brother and treaſonable conſpiracy with him, oblige me to command you to leave my Court. Retire therefore to a private ſtation, and confine yourſelf to your own eſtate at Anathoth.

Joab, the General, hearing of Adonijah's execution was greatly terrified and alarmed, he inſtantly fled to the horns of the Altar for a ſanctuary, the only hopes of ſafety. Solomon commanded Benaiah to drag him from thence, and bring him into Court. Joab told him, he would die where he was, upon which the King ordered his General to take off his head, but that his body ſhould have an honourable burial at his own houſe in the Wilderneſs.

Benaiah for his faithful Services, was now appointed Commander in Chief over all the Forces of Iſrael, and Zadoc was confirmed in the High-Prieſt-hood.

Solomon called next for Shimei, and he directed him to build a houſe in Jeruſalem, and never more to paſs the Brook Cedron, and the King enforced his performance of the contract by a ſolemn Oath. It was three years after, two of his domeſtics were miſſing, and eſcaped to Geſhur, and Shimei rode haſtily to ſeek them, but on his return to the City, Solomon ſent him word, he had now forfeited his life, and what was

much

much worſe, he had violated his Oath to God, and his perjury would now meet with its deſerved puniſhment, Solomon ſent Benaiah his General, and commanded him to put Shimei to death. Having thus removed and puniſhed his enemies and State Priſoners, in order to encreaſe his dignity and ſtrengthen himſelf ſtill more, he ſought an alliance with Egypt, the moſt powerful of all the Empires around him, and he married Shulamite the Daughter of Pharoah. Pharoah preſented her with the City of Gezer, as a dowry; Gezer formerly belonged to the Canaanites, and had been burnt to the ground, Solomon rebuilt it, new peopled the City, and it became a very valuable acquiſition.

Solomon's next object was, inſpecting the Walls of his Metropolis, a great part he rebuilt and fortified, although, during his whole reign, he lived in the profoundeſt peace. Solomon began by adminiſtering himſelf the moſt impartial judgment, promoted throughout his Kingdom a ſtrict obſervance of the laws, paying always a pious and rigid regard to the good Counſel, and wiſe Commands of his Father. The young Prince buſily employed himſelf, early and late, in affairs of Government, with unwearied zeal, prudence, and diſcretion.

At this time, Solomon ſet out on a journey to Gibeon, and on the high brazen Altar, he offered up a thouſand ſacrifices and burnt-offerings.

His diſtinguiſhed piety, and this his wiſe beginning, procured him the bleſſing of Almighty God, and it was the night enſuing, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, at the dead of night, and commanded him to aſk, whatever he moſt ardently wiſhed for. Conſcious of his tender years, the anxious and important weight of Government, his ignorance and inability, how wiſely to hold the reign, and guide it for his People's advantage, Solomon ſays, " Give me " O' Lord, ſound judgment, a right under- " ſtanding, to judge this People with equity and " truth."

So ingenuous and wiſe a requeſt, obtained for him, a wiſdom and knowledge, which no mortal had ever poſſeſſed, and it was accompanied with a promiſe of earthly bleſſings, he had moſt modeſtly and judiciouſly declined to aſk for, viz. riches, honours, peace and happineſs. Solomon leaped out of bed, he fell proſtrate on the ground, and devoutly worſhipped God.

The

The day following, moſt ſeriouſly impreſſed he ſet out on his return to Jeruſalem, Solomon there recognized this very extraordinary and ſignal event, this great goodneſs of God, and religiouſly offered up a magnificent royal Sacrifice, and made a Princely feaſt for all his People.

In his High Court of Judicature, enthroned in ſtate, two women were brought before him, the one held a young infant alive, the other brought a dead child. Both women ſtrenuouſly contended for the living one, and they both, as poſitively diſclaimed the dead. It was now thought impoſſible to adjudge the living infant to the right Mother. Solomon wiſely concluded nature would beſt unravel the difficulty; the King ordered into Court, one of his Body-Guard, and commanded him to divide both the living child, and the dead one, and then give each of the Mother's one half of each child. The Soldiers appearance and the drawn ſword, ſo terrified and alarmed the real Mother, ſhe clung hold of the man, roaring out aloud, not to hurt her child, ſhe would give up her child to her adverſary, pierced to the ſoul at the thoughts of butchering it; the other woman was ſatisfied, ſhe ſilently applauded the ſentence, and admired the wiſdom of the Judge.

The

The King directed the living child to her, who had given ſuch an artleſs and feeling teſtimony of her being its Parent.

A difficulty ſo wiſely ſolved, procured the Judge the high opinion of all the Court, and of every one who heard the deciſion.

The wiſdom of Solomon, became no leſs conſpicuous in the prudent choice he made of all his Officers; in the exact order and magnificence of his Court; in the œconomy of his Houſehold, and the proviſions for his Family.

The bill of fare for each day, was

* Thirty Meaſures of fine flour.
Double the quantity of common flour.
Ten fatted Oxen.
Twenty Paſture Oxen.

One hundred Sheep, beſides Harts, and Roebucks and fallow Deer, poultry, fiſh, fruit, and vegetables in abundance.

Out of each Canton or Tribe, a Steward was appointed, and they ſupplied the houſehold in rotation, every ſteward from his own diſtrict, and each of the twelve, continued their reſpective offices one month.

* A Meaſure was eight buſhels and a half.

His royal magnificence appeared in the number of tables he kept, his coſtly furniture, the ſplendour of his equipages, and his ſtables, in which he had twelve thouſand ſtalls. Solomon was the firſt who introduced chariots drawn by horſes in Jeruſalem; his number of carriages was fourteen hundred. He ſent for them out of Egypt, and he ſupplied all the neighbouring Princes round about him, for every chariot and four horſes he obliged them to pay him ſix hundred ſhekels,* and one hundred and fifty was the price for every ſingle horſe. Bales and large quantities of Linen, and other commodities were brought him from Egypt, the Annual Revenue from all which was immenſe.

Solomon ſhewed great wiſdom in adjuſting his cuſtoms and finances, in regulating his Army and appointing his Guards, although in the profoundeſt Peace, he maintained twelve thouſand Horſemen quartered and diſperſed them among the Tribes, out of which he elected by rotation his Body-Guards, his Watch, and his Guards of State.

His Subjects were very numerous, they were men of valour, and many of them opulent.

* A Shekel, two Shillings and Six-pence.

Wealth ſo immenſe gave him a powerful ſway, by far the richeſt, moſt exalted, grandeſt and moſt powerful Monarch of the Eaſt. By his Friends and Allies reſpected and beloved, they were all pouring in upon him the moſt magnificent preſents. By his Enemies he was feared. All the Crowned Heads around him, were paying him in, their yearly Tributes.

His Dominions extended from the River Euphrates, even to the Nile, and the Kings of all thoſe Countries between them, were tributary.

His fame, wiſdom, and magnificence, made his Metropolis the reſort of numbers, and a large concourſe of ſtrangers was an encreaſe of its wealth. Gold and ſilver loſt their intrinſic value by their over-abundance.

Solomon was well acquainted with the advantages of Commerce, he carried on a trafick with the Spice Merchants in Arabia, and the South, and another valuable merchandize with the inhabitants of the North, and he traded largely to Egypt, for linens, yarns, horſes and carriages; beſides Cuſtom-houſe duties, and tolls, theſe brought into his Treaſury immenſe ſums.

Nations

Nations and Kings around him, often paid in their annual Tributes in the commodities of their various Countries. Moab ſent in yearly, one hundred thouſand lambs, and as many rams, with their wool.

It was cuſtomary for every one to approach the Throne with a gift, Subjects in general were expected to bring in preſents to his Majeſty, and to a King ſo much beloved, they liberally imparted of the beſt of all their ſtores, veſſels of ſilver, and veſſels of gold without number.

The Revenue his Navy brought in, excluſive of his Cuſtoms, amounted annually to ſix hundred talents of gold, conſiderably above three million, beſides precious ſtones, ſpices, ivory, ebony, and the rich commodities of India.

All the Tribes of Iſrael, each under his vine, and under his fig tree, ſweetly enjoyed the bleſſings of Peace, of Plenty and Freedom. Excepting the poor Canaanites, and a few Priſoners and Captives, all Iſrael was free. Among the Sovereign Princes, that ſought the friendſhip of Solomon, Hiram King of Tyre, was the firſt, who had ſent Ambaſſadors to congratulate him on his Acceſſion, and offer him his ſervices, and by

them on their return back, Solomon ſent him this letter.

Solomon to King Hiram.

" Know that David, my Father, was deſirous to " build a Temple to God, but engaged in con- " tinual Wars, he was prevented; for he never " ceaſed from Conqueſt, until he made all his " Enemies, his Tributaries. I give God thanks " for the Peace I enjoy, and having much leiſure, " I purpoſe to erect a houſe to God, according " as God foretold my Father that I ſhould build " it; my requeſt to you is, that you will ſend " ſome of your People, with my ſervants to " Mount Lebanon, to hew wood; for the Sido- " nians underſtand that buſineſs better than my " ſubjects; and as to wages, whatever you ſhall " think reaſonable, I will pay to the workmen."

Hiram peruſed the contents, was well pleaſed with the requeſt, and returned back this anſwer.

King Hiram to King Solomon.

" Thanks to God, he has given your Father's " Crown to you, a wiſe and virtuous Prince; I " am extremely pleaſed with it, and will ſupply " you with every thing you deſire in your letter. " I will order the talleſt and faireſt Cedar, and " Cypreſs trees to be cut down, and carried

" by

" by my ſervants to the Sea ſide; whom I will
" further command, to prepare a veſſel, and ſail
" with them to whatever part of your Kingdom
" you pleaſe; from whence your men may tranſ-
" port them to Jeruſalem. In exchange for theſe
" things, let us have a ſupply of corn; which we
" who inhabit an Iſland, ſtand in need off."

Duplicates of theſe epiſtles, were preſerved in the Jewiſh and Tyrian records.

Solomon commended the frankneſs and kindneſs of King Hiram. He ſent yearly twenty thouſand meaſures of corn, and twenty butts or veſſels of oil: and Solomon added as many caſks of wine. Such good beginnings produced a laſting and inviolable friendſhip, and the two Kings ſwore always to maintain it. Hiram ſent the Cedar, Cypreſs and the Firs on floats to Joppa, Solomon's Servants and Officers received them there, and they were brought from thence to Jeruſalem. The friendly Alliance now commenced between theſe two Princes, ended only with their lives.

In order to relieve his own People and make their trouble and burthen leſs, the poor Canaanites were now aſſembled, and all the foreign ſlaves throughout the Kingdom, and they amounted

amounted to one hundred and fifty three thouſand ſix hundred. Solomon commanded that ſeventy thouſand of them ſhould be employed as labourers, to fetch and carry, to heave and work, and eighty thouſand of them ſhould be ſent to hew timber, and cut ſtone and marble out of the rock. He appointed a ſuitable number of Officers, Overſeers, and Maſters to ſuperintend and direct every days duty, and every ones employment. From amongſt his own ſubjects Solomon ſelected next, thirty thouſand men, and under Adoniram, whom he conſtituted a Principal or head Governor, he ſent, ten thouſand at a time, to Lebanon to work and aſſiſt the men of Tyre in hewing wood, marble and other articles there, and they were afterwards wrought by the Tyrian carvers, maſons, and artificers, and when poliſhed, cut out, and prepared, were put on board the floats and conveyed by water to Joppa, but much of them were finiſhed on the plains of Jordan. Solomon exchanged the ten thouſand men he ſent to Lebanon every month.

The vaſt number of hands employed as labourers, the activity and great diligence of the workmen, and the vigilence of no leſs than three thouſand ſix hundred Overſeers, ſo wonderfully brought forward the work, that in the fourth year of his reign, Solomon was enabled to lay the foundation

foundation of this moſt immenſe and ſuperb ſtructure, which amazing Work was begun the twenty firſt day of April, in the year of the World, 2990, and 1014 years before the birth of our Saviour.

The foundation of this immenſe pile deſcribed in the ſixth and ſeventh Chapters of the ſecond book of the Kings, was laid on Mount Moriah, and it took up the whole group of the Mountain, great indeed was the labour of levelling it, rough prominent eminences of ſolid rock, and proportionate hollows were filled up, to form a large capacious area, a firm ſolid level baſis for this moſt magnificent Superſtructure.

Mount Moriah takes its name from two Hebrew roots, conveying the idea of viſion, and God, united they expreſs, here God was ſeen.

David had appointed and conſecrated this ſpot for the ſtructure of the Temple, and it had been wholly encloſed in the City Walls, and long frequented as the ſacred place of the Altar, where the Prophet Gad had met David and appointed the peace-offerings and ſacrifices to be offered up; and it was the awful ſpot over which the Deſtroying Angel, with a drawn ſword, hung as it were between Heaven and Earth, halting

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and waiting his orders to execute the further vengeance of the Almighty, or put a ſtop to the raging peſtilence. Here he had been ſeen by David, and at his very fervent prayer and expoſtulation, God was mercifully pleaſed to prevent its progreſs, when it had only very ſlightly viſited Jeruſalem.

With ſuch prodigious ſpeed and alacrity was this moſt magnificent Structure carried on, that in little more than ſeven years it was finiſhed. Every article of ſtone, marble, wood, braſs, iron, plates of gold and jewels were cut, poliſhed, carved, fitted, beat out, ſet, and all but joined and adjuſted to their proper places, before ever they were brought to Mount Moriah.

The Pile of building was immenſe, of poliſhed marble, in ſolid pieces, beautifully white, of ſixty feet in length and upwards, it fronted the Eaſt, with a Tower, one hundred and twenty cubits high. The inſide was all wainſcoted with Cedar, from top to bottom, and corniſhed and inlaid with gold.

After four extenſive flights of regular ſteps, each flight terminating in a large, ſpacious, magnificent area, you enter by a ſtately Portico the Temple, its marble floor, was inlaid with plates

of

of gold, its corniſh and highly finiſhed roof was covered over with gold, when the ſun ſhone the ſtrong glare, and blaze of light was moſt ſplendid and dazzling; paſſing forwards in this ſpacious and ſuperb ſpace, ſupported by a number of elegant and ornamented pillars, the Temple ſeemed then divided into two parts, at the further end of the Inner Temple, was the ſolemn and moſt ſacred Holy of Holies, with a ſuperb Cedar door curiouſly wrought, inlaid and ſumptuouſly embelliſhed, and from a high and lofty arch immediately before it, hung a rich and very beautiful veil, of the ſofteſt and moſt delicate ſilk, with an embroidery of flowers, in ſcarlet, purple and hyacynth. Within ſide the veil and this ſuperb door, were placed two large figures of Angels, they were covered with gold, and had wings which ſtretched five cubits, and they overſpread the Ark, which was depoſited between them, and underneath their wings.

In the wide and moſt magnificent ſpace before the veil, an Altar of braſs was erected, a ſquare of twenty cubits, and ten cubits high, whereon were laid the burnt-offerings. And near it ſtood the Brazen Sea, ten cubits in diameter and a hands-breath in thickneſs, made uſe of, to waſh and purify the Sacrifices.

Here were alſo a number of golden tables for

the ſuperb candleſticks, golden veſſels and golden diſhes. One much larger than the reſt, held the bread of God, called the ſhew bread. A number of cheſts for the habits of the Prieſts, their ephods, their girdles, and their ſilken veſts; two hundred thouſand trumpets, all ſorts of muſical inſtruments, harps, timbrels, and pſalteries for the bands and for the Levites who chanted the hymns, accompanying the muſic with their voices. So magnificently did Solomon provide for the Houſe of God. A ſtructure for ſtrength, and ſplendour, and beauty, unequalled in all the World. So ſtupendous no tongue could ever deſcribe it, no eyes could comprehend, or even themſelves give credit to what they beheld.

A work, the wonder of ages, thus ſpeedily performed, Solomon directed all the golden veſſels, and utenſils he had prepared, to be carried into the Temple, he then ſat down, and wrote circular letters to all his Nobles, his Generals, the Magiſtrates, Elders, and Rulers of all the Tribes of Iſrael, commanding them all to repair to Jeruſalem. The grand Jubilee was ſo very near, he fixed on that time for their general meeting, to take a view of the Temple now finiſhed, and accompany him, in removing the Ark of God into it. The me he appointed was alſo very near

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the feaſt of Tabernacles, the moſt ſolemn and grandeſt of all the Jewiſh Feſtivals.

At theſe very extraordinary ſeaſons, in order to gratify the eager wiſh of all the People, to ſee this magnificent ſtructure, now on its firſt opening, immenſely great and almoſt univerſal was the national reſort to the Capital. Very ſoon after, they took up the Ark, and all the utenſils, the candleſtick, and the golden table, and carried them into the Temple, placing them in the Holy of Holies, in the very ſame manner they had been accuſtomed to ſtand in the Tabernacle.

A moſt magnificent proceſſion was exhibited. Solomon accompanied by all his Court, his Nobles, his General Officers, the Heads, Elders, and Chiefs of all the Tribes of Iſrael, walked before it.

The Ark ſupported by Prieſts, and Levites only, and the High-Prieſt, in his moſt pompous robes.

A numerous band of muſicians followed it, playing a ſolemn march, awfully reverential and ſacred.

A proceſſion of Prieſts, two by two, bearing the utenſils, the golden candleſtick, the Altar of Incenſe, the Golden Table.

After them the men ſingers, and women ſingers, a Virgin Choir, cloathed in white, chanted Hymns, and Anthems, and Songs of Praiſe. They all thus aſcended the four flights of ſteps, entered the grand Porch and the Temple, proceeding on towards the Ark, near the Veil and the Brazen Altar. The Prieſts alone entered the Holy of Holies, and even they inſtantaneouſly withdrew. The air rung all the while with the loud blaſt of trumpets, and the voices of all the Levites, celebrating the high praiſes of God, "For he is good, his mercy endureth for ever, "O' give thanks to the God of Gods, for his "mercy endureth for ever."

No ſooner was the Ark depoſited underneath the wings of the Cherubims, and the Prieſts had with-drew from the Holy of Holies, but a thick and viſible cloud deſcended in the Temple, and ſo totally obſcured the light, the Prieſts and People could not ſee one another, and from out of this, ſoon was ſeen to iſſue a glory and brightneſs undeſcribable. God thus ſignally took poſſeſſion of his Temple, and conſpicuouſly filled it with the emblem of his Preſence and Glory. The People with reverential awe, all cried out, God had entered into his Temple, God would reſide amongſt his People. The King had taken his ſeat, but he now inſtantly roſe up, and commanded

manded all, and every one preſent, to proſtrate themſelves before God, he devoutly lifted up his hands towards Heaven, in the moſt ſolemn manner he dedicated the Sacred building to God, addreſſing him audibly in fervent earneſt prayer.

" Thou Lord poſſeſſeſt an everlaſting Houſe, thou madeſt Heaven, Earth, Air, and Sea. All theſe thou filleſt; nor can all theſe contain thee. This Temple I have built to thy Name, that in performing our Sacrifices, we may ſend up our ſupplications to God; perſuaded thou art preſent here, and abſent no where. Thy eye ſurveys the Univerſe, thou heareſt all things, this Temple cannot prevent thy dwelling every where. A ſtranger to none, acquainted with all. But will God, indeed, dwell on Earth? behold the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, cannot contain thee. How much leſs, this houſe that I have built.

After this, Solomon deſcends to a variety of caſes, and moſt eloquently, and earneſtly and devoutly implores mercy, preſervation, and forgiveneſs.

Though Solomon was thus fully perſuaded God was every where, and could be excluded no where, yet he ambitiouſly inculcates the idea of

God

God, under that of a tutelary Deity, always hearing, and propitious to the prayers offered up in the Temple of Jeruſalem.

The King now turned round and addreſſed himſelf to his People, and he devoutly and moſt ſolemnly bleſſed them all.

Solomon then threw himſelf on the ground, and lay ſome time in a poſture of adoration. When he roſe up, he ordered the victims to be laid upon the Altar, and God was pleaſed to accept his offering; and in ſight of all preſent, a flaſh of fire ſuddenly deſcended, and totally conſumed the Sacrifice, the People were in raptures of joy, and they all fell down and worſhipped. "God was come, to take up his abode in his "Temple."

Solomon wiſely availed himſelf of this pious diſpoſition, and very awful ſolemnity, to impreſs on their minds, the neceſſity of perſeverence, circumſpection and right conduct. After he had offered up twenty thouſand calves, and one hundred and twenty thouſand lambs, peace-offerings for himſelf and for all his People, he broke up the aſſembly, and the King ordered the Hebrews, and their Wives, and all their Children, to be feaſted with them.

Immenſely

Immenſely great was the firſt days Sacrifice, as numbers kept pouring in burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings in great profuſion, conſcienciouſly awed by the ſolemnities, the People were thus, one and all, religiouſly making their peace with God.

The ceremony begun the latter end of October, and laſted ſeven days, and a vaſt number of victims were every day brought in. At the expiration of this ſolemn Sacrifice and Dedication, immediately followed the feaſt of Tabernacles, this laſted another ſeven days, and is was celebrated in the Temple with aſtoniſhing ſplendour and magnificence; and Solomon with a Princely liberality entertained the whole People, and fed them all plentifully and ſumptuouſly at his own expence. After fourteen days, thus religiouſly ſpent and in high feſtivity, when all was over, every one returned home to his own houſe, full of joy and the moſt hearty approbation, ſinging ſongs of praiſe and hymns to God. It ſeemed, not at all unlikely, that ſcenes of ſo much ſplendour and magnificence, might too much elate, too highly exalt the mind, even of this wiſe and amiable young Prince, and God was now pleaſed to repreſent to him, in a dream, on the very firſt night of the Conſecration and this Solemn Dedication of the Temple, that He accepted the Edifice he had built him, and was ready to renew

his

his Promiſes to him and his Poſterity, as long as, He, and they, ſhould ſerve him with an upright heart; but in caſe they provoked him by Idolatry and diſobedience, that very Temple, the wonder of the World, ſhould infallibly become a deſolation, a dwelling for owls and bats, a proverb and a reproach among all Nations.

After the building of this magnificent Temple, Solomon retained the maſons, joiners, artificers, and various other workmen, and he employed them all in the City. Solomon firſt built a royal Palace for himſelf, and another for his Queen, the Daughter of Pharoah, they were both adorned with all the embelliſhments of art, and with whatever his rich and immenſe Treaſury could ſupply. He was almoſt thirteen years completing them, and there was in his own Palace one very magnificent and ſpacious apartment, called the Porch or Judgment-Hall, in which was erected his ſuperb and highly elegant Throne, and on one ſide of it, were the benches for his Secretaries and Counſellors. This was the Seat of Judgment, the Throne for publick audience, where petitions were offered up, the addreſſes of his Nobles and foreign embaſſies received, where Ambaſſadors delivered their letters and credentials and payed their homage, while here he ſat enthroned in Sovereign pomp and royalty.

The

The Throne was of Ivory and inlaid with Gold; the aſcent to it by ſix ſteps, each ſtep, ſupported on either ſide, with a Lion couchant, and the two Arms upheld with two Lions ſtanding, and they were each as big as life, all theſe, and even the ſteps themſelves were covered with plates of gold. The Seat was ſupported by a Bullock couchant, and he was all of gold.

The Temple, and theſe royal Palaces with all their coſtly furniture, veſſels, utenſils and ornaments, all of pure gold, were finiſhed in the ſpace of twenty years. Jeruſalem thus ennobled has been emblematically called the Forreſt of Lebanon, from the immenſe quantities of Cedar, which ſo diſtinguiſhingly perfumed the Temple, and the Palaces. Lebanon ſeemed, as it were, tranſported to Jeruſalem.

After theſe twenty years employ, Solomon ſent back the maſons and artificers, furniſhed by Hiram King of Tyre, and to ſhew his gratitude for the many valuable preſents, and ſignal ſervices which had been done him by that Prince, Solomon preſented him with twenty Cities of Galilee, as they were the neareſt adjoining to his own territories.

When the Tyrian King went to take a view of the Country, and the twenty Cities, which Solomon had preſented to him, he expreſſed his diſſatisfaction by refuſing them, and he gave them a name of contempt, the word ſignified when interpreted, " dirty, diſpleaſing."

Solomon afterwards built theſe Cities all anew and planted them with Colonies of his own People. Some few of the Tyrian artificers, choſe to reſide at Jeruſalem, and now many of the Hebrews were become expert builders and workmen. Solomon employed them in ſurrounding the whole City, with a ſtrong wall and ſtately Fortifications. He then ſent them to build walls round many other Cities, and he erected a great number of ſtore-houſes, buildings for his carriages and his horſes, large magazines and granaries for corn, wine, oil and proviſions, and ſtores of ammunition. Alſo magnificent armories, and he hung them all round with ſhields and implements of War.

When Solomon appeared in publick, beſides his Body-guards, three hundred golden Shields were always carried in ſtate before him, on his return, they were all hung up on a ſtately row of pillars, an ornament at the grand entrance of his Palace.

In order to ſecure and perpetuate a free communication between his Kingdom and Syria, Solomon erected very ſtrong fortreſſes, and built caſtles on Mount Lebanon, and he very ſoon after brought under his yoke, the remainder of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebuſites, and he made them all his Tributaries.

God had now performed the promiſe made to Abraham, that his ſeed ſhould poſſeſs the land, from the River of Egypt, to the great River, the River Euphrates, which now bounded Judea on the Eaſt, the land of the Philiſtines on the Weſt, Egypt on the South, ſo that Syria, Damaſcus, Moab and Ammon, which all lay between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean Sea, were all in ſubjection and tributary.

Solomon as much as poſſible exempted his own ſubjects from all hard labour, and every kind of ſlavery, he appointed them Overſeers, Officers, Guards and Soldiers in his Army, all the drudgery was performed by the Canaanites, and ſuch foreign ſlaves from the Countries around, as were under his yoke, captives and in bondage to Iſrael.

Among the many Royal Viſitors, the fame, wiſdom, and grandeur of Solomon, drew to his

Court, the moſt conſiderable of all was Nicaulis, Queen of Sheba. A Princeſs highly educated, of great knowledge, and vieing with the Jewiſh Monarch in opulence, ſtate, and grandeur. The Chief of Arabia,* and Queen of all the South, a Country abounding with the richeſt perfumes, precious ſtones, and mines of gold.

Her ſex, her dignity, her wealth, the remoteneſs of her abode, all greatly diſtinguiſhed her, ſhe came from the ends of the Earth (for the Sabæans were bounded only by the India Sea) to commune with Solomon, ſhe had heard of his Fame, his Virtue and his Wiſdom, of the ſplendour of his Court, his Palaces, and his Temple. She could not credit the one half of what ſhe heard, inſpired with curioſity, impatient to ſee him, ſhe undertook a very long journey, from her own Country to Jeruſalem, reſolving to make inquiry herſelf, into the truth of reports given out by his ſailors, ſo extraordinary, into the merits of a character ſo exalted and amiable.

She came in royal pomp, attended with a Princely train, a magnificent retinue, the luxuries and ſplendour of Arabia, Camels laden with

* Arabia Felix South of Canaan.

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the richeſt perfumes, gold from her own mines, and precious ſtones of great brilliancy.

The arrival of the Queen was announced by her Servants, Solomon himſelf went out to meet her, and he received her, with all the reſpect due to her ſtation, and the high honours ſhe was doing to his Court. The Queen was aſtoniſhed at the magnificence and beauty of the Palace, the pomp and ſtate with which ſhe was uſhered in, the very reſpectful Ceremonies, the wiſe and curious contrivance, the elegant and maſterly execution, and a beautiful, and ornamented part, called Lebanon Grove, raiſed her Wonder and admiration moſt of all.

With equal amazement, ſhe viewed the ſplendour of his daily entertainments, the order and œconomy of his Houſehold, the ſuperb Liveries of his Servants, his Lords in waiting, the pomp of his Guard, and the exact and moſt reſpectful Decorum of all. Having now the honour of his converſation, ſhe put to him (as was very uſual among Princes) a number of abſtruſe and difficult queſtions, to inform her own judgment, and a trial of his ſkill and wiſdom in reſolving them. Solomon's ſagacity excited much her wonder, and abundantly ſatisfied her reſpecting them all.

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The King next introduced her into the Temple, and entertained her with a ſight of its magnificence, the devotion and pomp of Jewiſh Worſhip, the Solemnity of Sacrifice, the Sacerdotal Habits, the reverential and ſacred Awe of Prieſts and Levites, the veil over the Holy of Holies, unable to conceal theſe her new feelings and the rapture they had raiſed, the Queen could no longer diſſemble impreſſions ſo powerful; inſpired by all which, and the ſanctity of the Religious Exerciſes and the Magnificence ſhe beheld, burſts out in a kind of Ecſtaſy, "Verily "O' King, of your Virtues, your Wiſdom and "your Riches, even talkative fame has ſaid too "little." All indeed ſhe has ſaid is true, and "yet half is not told of your happineſs. Fame "reports all ſhe can tell, but the Majeſty, Dig-"nity and Grandeur which my eyes ſee, could "never be told. Happy are the Hebrews, thy "ſervants, who every day ſee you, and hear your "wiſdom, and bleſſed be the Lord God, ſo kind "to this Country and People, as to make thee, "King over them." After this polite and moſt elegant compliment, freely, as a Royal Queen, ſhe preſented Solomon with one hundred and twenty talents of gold; a cargo of ſpices and rich perfumes, and precious ſtones of immenſe value. Solomon returned the Queen a variety of Eaſtern curioſities, an interchange of royal preſents, and

ſhe

ſhe full of wonder, and the high praiſes of the King, ſet out on her journey home, ſhe and all her ſervants.

Hitherto, every thing we have ſeen, gives us the nobleſt and moſt pleaſing idea of the wiſdom, piety, and magnificence of this amiable and illuſtrious Monarch. No Prince was ever ſo diſtinguiſhingly honoured. No Reign ſo peaceable, proſperous and happy. Solomon had been repeatedly warned by his Father, by ſignal viſitations, and by the Prophets, in the moſt ſerious moments of his life, and in dreams upon his bed, that the promiſes of God were conditional, annexed always to a virtuous conduct, and obedience to his laws. "If thou ſeek the Lord, he will be found of "thee, if thou forſake him, he will caſt thee off "for ever."

Notwithſtanding all theſe expreſs and wiſe admonitions, Solomon became a ſlave to his paſſions, and an Idolater, he married a multitude of ſtrange Wives, without diſtinction of Nation, Country, or Religion, and without the leaſt regard to God's expreſs commands and prohibition. Solomon ſuffered himſelf to be by them ſeduced into Pagan Worſhip, and all manner of Idolatry. He himſelf joined in the outward act of Idol Worſhip, and he partook of their feaſts and abominations

minations. The number of his wives amounted to ſeven hundred, and he had three hundred concubines. Solomon built Altars and Temples, to all their different Gods, innumerable were their Idols and their Temples; the God of Moab was worſhipped on the Mount of Olives, and Moloch the God of the Ammonites. Such a ſhameful defection and depravity could but be diſpleaſing to God, and he appeared to him a third time in a dream, to warn him of his danger, and repreſent to him his criminal ingratitude, ſtrongly impreſſing his mind, it ſhould not go unpuniſhed. On account of David his Father, he ſhould reign over the Kingdom of Iſrael, as long as he himſelf lived, but after his death, two only of the twelve tribes ſhould continue with his Son and his Grandſon, ten tribes ſholud be given to his Servant.

Hiſtory no where records, whether ſo ſevere a denunciation, awakened him to Repentance. Solomon died in diſhonour, and left the World inglorious.

He had reigned forty years, and was now only fifty-eight. They buried him in the ſtately Monument of his Father, in the City of David.

Solomon is ſaid to have wrote a great number of Books, but we have only his Proverbs, his book

book called Eccleſiaſtes or the Preacher, and the Canticles, all the reſt are loſt, as well as thoſe of the Prophet Nathan, who had been his Tutor, and had himſelf wrote the Life and Reign of Solomon.

Ahijah and Iddo, two other Prophets, had alſo penned the Hiſtory of this highly favoured Prince, and in a Reign ſo diſtinguiſhingly glorious, many intereſting and very inſtructive events muſt have occurred, during forty years uninterrupted proſperity; we have therefore ſincerely to regret, that the labour of no leſs than three Prophets, ſo illuſtriouſly recognizing a Character and Reign, held up to future ages, as an example of piety, prudence, caution and integrity, perſevered in amidſt the moſt ſplendid, bewitching, and alluring ſcenes of opulence, grandeur, and magnificence, ſhould be all loſt, as they would no doubt have been to us leſſons wonderfully pleaſing, and full of improvement.

The learning of the Eaſt, at that celebrated period, conſiſted much in witty ſayings, pithy ſentences, interpreting riddles, fables, and parables. Solomon at leiſure, eaſe, and uninterrupted peace, conſpicuouſly excelled in all ſuch lively ſports and fancies, he is ſaid to have ſpoke more than three thouſand, and it was the faſhion-

able amuſement of the times, to unveil their myſtery, and ſet down in a party to reſolve them. Princes, and neighbouring Kings ſent their ſayings and riddles to one another, the entertainment of a drawing room and a Court, it was a high honour to reſolve them, and you ſubmitted to a fine, when you gave up the purſuit; it was often a ſort of wager or bett, and a reward was held out to the perſon who unriddled them firſt. It is recorded of the King of Tyre, that he has often paid large ſums of money to Solomon, for his ſuperior expertneſs and many happy explanations.

Solomon is ſaid to have equalled his Father as a Poet, and to have ſurpaſſed him as a Moraliſt. "God gave him wiſdom, and underſtanding, and "largeneſs of heart, even as the ſand that is on "the Sea ſhore." Majeſty and mildneſs, Power and Pleaſure wiſely enjoyed, were the grand Supporters of his throne, and in the early part of his Reign, this Illuſtrous Heir of the houſe of David, exhibited all the Glory of ſublunary greatneſs. Amiable, beloved, and revered. He poſſeſſed all the land, God had ſo graciouſly promiſed to Abraham, from the River of Egypt, to the great River, the River Euphrates. Syria, Damaſcus, Moab and Ammon, Kings and Empires were all of them tributary.

A Reign

A Reign divinely bleſſed with uninterrupted peace and proſperity, " Every man dwelt in " ſafety under his own Vine, and under his own " Fig tree, even all the days of Solomon." We have much reaſon, indeed, to lament the loſs of his books, for this Prince, educated from early life by a Prophet, ſhone the firſt, and the greateſt literary Character that ever wrote; his book of Proverbs contains many wiſe reflections and moral ſayings conciſely expreſſed, ſimple and plain, but ſolid and good—ſome very grave and ſerious exhortations, and others of them ſpirited, witty, and fanciful, the experienced Tutor wiſely ſuiting the different ages and various capacities of his pupils. Solomon calls them, " Apples of gold, in pic- " tures of ſilver," and very probably intended them as leſſons to his children.

The book of Eccleſiaſtes, is a ſyſtem more grave and devotional, becoming the Preacher, and adding dignity to the Pulpit.

His Songs, warm, gay, enthuſiaſtic flights, Images and Metaphors ever varying, amazing were his Sallies of Fancy, but they were more than equalled by the graver Abilities and Solidity of his Judgment.

ESSAY XIII.

ON THE REIGNS OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

REHOBOAM.	ATHALIAH.
ABIJAM.	JOASH.
ASA.	AMAZIAH
JEHOSOPHAT.	UZZIAH.
JEHORAM.	JOTHAM.
AHAZIAH.	AHAZ.

REHOBOAM.

REHOBOAM.

NINE hundred, and ſeventy ſeven years, before the birth of our Saviour, and in the year of the World, 3027; upon the death of Solomon, Rehoboam his Son, by Naamah the Ammoniteſs, who was now arrived at the age of forty-one, ſet out, accompanied by the Elders, his Nobles, and his whole Court for Sechem, a City nearly in the centre of his Kingdom, and in the Tribe of Ephraim; Rehoboam there ſummoned all Iſrael to meet him, and pay him homage.

The People had long laboured under very burthenſome and heavy taxes; they now humbly requeſted a redreſs of their grievances, and dutifully

dutifully preſented to him a petition they had drawn up, but to give it more weight, and incline him to attend to it, they at the ſame time forwarded an expreſs into Egypt, and brought back Jeroboam, a highly ſpirited youth, once their Overſeer, and he had long lived in full expectation and was inſpired with the ambition of royalty. Jeroboam from motives of prudence, had fled from the preſence of King Solomon, and retired into Egypt, where he was watching a favourable opportunity, and concealing himſelf from the notice and diſpleaſure of his Prince.

Rehoboam on receiving the petition of the People, deſired them to wait three days, during which time, he would aſſemble the Elders, and form a council from them, and his Nobles.

Men of years and experience (Privy Counſellors of his Father) were firſt ſummoned, and the advice of this Council was, to comply with the requeſt of the People; with Zeal and Unanimity they all addreſſed the Prince, and aſſured him ſuch conduct and acquieſcence would be ſure to gain him the love of his ſubjects, and engage them in his intereſts for ever.

A Council from among the young and inexperienced was next aſſembled, and they, well knowing the haughty pride and vanity of the Prince,

and

and yielding to his paſſions and his pleaſure, adviſed him to this anſwer. " My little finger ſhall " be thicker than my Father's loins; my Father " did lade you, with a heavy yoke, I will add to " your yoke, my Father chaſtiſed you with " whips, I will chaſtiſe you with ſcorpions."

On the third day, Jeroboam, at the head of a great multitude aſſembled before Rehoboam, and this Prince blinded by the pomp of royalty, and judging it unworthy of his Majeſty and Authority to yield to their demands, aſſumed all the Tyrant, and addreſſed them in the language of the young men. The inſult ſet the People in a flame, one and all cried out, what portion have we in David? What inheritance in the Son of Jeſſe? To your Tents O' Iſrael! —To your Tents O' Iſrael!

Ten of the twelve Tribes inſtantly revolted from Rehoboam, Adoram his tax-gatherer, (an aged ſervant of his Father and Grand-Father) upon offering to name the taxes, was fell furiouſly upon by the populace, and they ſtoned him to death on the ſpot. The Prince was greatly terrified and alarmed, he ran haſtily, mounted his chariot, and drove off full ſpeed to his Capital. The City of Sechem was about two and thirty miles from Jeruſalem. The ten revolting Tribes, blew the trumpets, and publickly proclaimed Jeroboam King over Iſrael. The Kingdoms of Judah, and Iſrael, ever after remained divided.

Rehoboam

Rehoboam appeared inexorable, he meditated revenge for the revolt, and the murder of Adoram. He raiſed a formidable Army, and marched out of Jeruſalem at the head of a hundred and eighty thouſand men, the Horrors of a civil war ſeemed inevitable, moſt mercifully to prevent them, Shemaiah the Prophet was ſent to the Tribes of Judah and Benjamin, to tell them, it was the will of God, the diviſion ſhould remain as it was; as ſoon as this meſſage was proclaimed through the Camp, each man returned to his own home, and the two Kings immediately ſet about fortifying and defending the frontiers of their Dominions.

Jeroboam dreading the danger of his ſubjects going up to worſhip at Jeruſalem, as was uſual on feſtivals, and viewing at that time the ſplendour of the City, the dreſſes of the Prieſts and the magnificence of the Temple, iſſued out a proclamation forbidding any of his People ever going up to worſhip or offer Sacrifice there.

Rehoboam during the ſpace of three years, made no alteration in the religious Services, he is ſaid to have worſhipped God, as David, and as Solomon his Father, had done. At the end of that period, Rehoboam became an idolater, and built high places and groves, and ſet up graven images in them, and to expreſs a total depravity,

he

he is ſaid to have placed them under every green Tree. God was angry with Rehoboam, and He permitted him to be chaſtiſed by Egypt. Shiſhak King of Egypt entered his territories with an Army conſiſting of twelve hundred chariots, ſixty thouſand horſe, and innumerable Troops and Allies. The Egyptian Monarch ravaged all the Country, laid ſiege to the fortified Cities, and took them, after which, he marched his Army up to the Capital. On this occaſion Shemaiah, the Prophet, was ſent again to Rehoboam, and he informed both King and People the viſitation was from God; on account of their idolatry and diſobedience, they ſhould all be carried away Captive into Egypt. Lively, and moſt diſtreſsful, were the lamentations of King and People, and by thus humbling themſelves before the Lord, by devoutly acknowledging their ſins, and ſeeking earneſtly to Him, they avoided a part of their puniſhment, and its ſeverity. God would not utterly deſtroy Judah; they ſhould now only become tributary. The Egyptian Monarch accompanied by his General-Officers, and a ſmall part of his Army, marched through the City of Jeruſalem, plundered the Temple and t he Palaces, and carried away with them, all the golden ſhields which Solomon, when he rode in ſtate, cauſed always to be carried before him, and which hung up in the Royal Portico, the ſuperb entrance to his Palace.

After this very diſgraceful plunder, and Shiſhak's return to Egypt, Rehoboam reigned twelve years in Judah, and died at Jeruſalem, in the fifty-eighth year of his age, and in the ſeventeenth of his reign.

A B I J A M.

THIS Prince was a favourite Son of Rehoboam, by Maachah daughter of Abiſhalom. He aſcended the Throne in the eighteenth year of his age, nine hundred and ſixty years before the birth of Chriſt, in the year of the World 3044.

Abijam was an active, ſpirited young Prince, of great courage, and martial proweſs. He commanded a powerful Army, of no leſs than four hundred thouſand men, and with unwearied aſſiduity, and moſt eager zeal, he endeavoured to unite again the Kingdoms of Judah and Iſrael; for

for this purpoſe he boldly marched his Army againſt Jeroboam, and encamped on the ſame Mount with the Army of Iſrael, and not very far from the borders of Ephraim. Jeroboam's Army conſiſted of twice the number of Abijam's. Both Kingdoms were idolaters, the true worſhip of God was neglected and laid aſide in both. Abijam practiſed all the abominations of his Father, but notwithſtanding he was an idolater, Abijam on the field of battle, in a ſpirited and ſtudied ſpeech, harangued the Army of his adverſary, upbraided them ſharply for their meanneſs and revolt, and even for their idolatry.

Jeroboam availed himſelf of Abijam's earneſt warmth, and of what he was about, and by an artful piece of Generalſhip, filed off party after party, and by degrees ſurrounded his whole Army; in a moment and ſituation ſo alarming, the ſpirited young Prince and all his People, devoutly and moſt fervently addreſſed themſelves to God in prayer. Abijam ordered the trumpets to ſound, a general ſhout throughout all his Army, the battle to commence, and they gallantly fought their way, through all the troops of Iſrael, and ſo immenſe and bloody was the ſlaughter, they put to the ſword five hundred thouſand Iſraelites.

Jeroboam

Jeroboam was hereby ſo mueh weakened and diſmayed, he never had afterwards courage or ſtrength to oppoſe Abijam.

Although this Prince acquired ſuch great power, and inſpired his troops with ſo much true ſpirit and magnanimity, Abijam reigned only three years, and then died at Jeruſalem leaving (to lament his death) no leſs than fourteen Wives and two and twenty Sons.

A S A,

IN the year of the World, 3047, and nine hundred and fifty ſeven years before the birth of our Saviour, Aſa, a Son of Abijam, at a very early age was proclaimed King of Judah.

Aſa

Aſa grew up an amiable and religious Prince, and by his wiſdom and piety, he confirmed the eſtabliſhment in Jeruſalem to his family. As during the ten firſt years of his Reign, Aſa was bleſt with peace, he had wiſely and buſily employed himſelf in deſtroying the heatheniſh abominations of his predeceſſors, and he depoſed his own Grand-mother, for patronizing idolatry, the King burnt to aſhes the idol ſhe had ſet up, near the Brook Kidron, its name was Horror, and he commanded them to throw the powdered aſhes into the water.

The People paid ſo much veneration, and had been ſo long indulged and accuſtomed to go up to worſhip on the high places, this truly virtuous Prince does not ſeem to have had influence and authority enough to ſuppreſs it, and many of them went up with very pious views and much ſeeming devotion. Aſa's own heart was ſaid to have been perfect with the Lord his God.

The King at this time ſet out on a journey through his Kingdom, to encourage his People in the true worſhip of Jehovah. Aſa repaired and fortifyed his Cities, and all his important poſts, the boundaries and frontiers of his Dominions, and he maintained a ſtanding Army of five hundred and eighty thouſand men.

It was ſoon after Aſa's return, that his Kingdom was invaded. The King of Ethiopia entered Judæa with an Army conſiſting of no leſs than a million of Troops, and Zera the Ethiopian Prince commanded them in perſon. Aſa's truſt was in God, and the pious King addreſſed him in a very devout and fervent prayer, " Help us O Lord " God, we rely upon Thee, in thy name we en- " gage this multitude." Aſa marched his Army againſt Zera, and he met him at Mareſhah, a moſt bloody battle was fought, the Ethiopian Prince, and all his mighty Hoſt were totally routed, Zera diſgracefully fled back, and Aſa returned home glorious and laden with ſpoils; the King made a moſt magnificent, and triumphal entry into Jeruſalem, and dedicated his ſpoils to God his Deliverer, and to the ſervice of the Temple. Aſa then ſet about repairing the great Altar, and to celebrate his victory, ſent an invitation to all ſtrangers as well as natives, to come to the Temple, and join in the grand ſolemnities of worſhip, Aſa with royal munificence on this occaſion, offered up ſeven hundred oxen, and ſeven thouſand ſheep.

On the minds of all his ſubjects, the King awfully impreſſed the moſt ſacred and ſolemn obligations to virtue, binding them by the conſcientious appeal of an oath, devoutly taken at the

the Altar, that they would continue the true worſhip of God to their lives end, and he iſſued out a proclamation and publick edict throughout his Kingdom, commanding all and every one of his ſubjects, who ſhould be hereafter found to have broke this his ſolemn oath and engagement, to be puniſhed with death.

Upon the King's pious, hearty, and very friendly invitation, many Iſraelites flocked to the Temple, attended its worſhip, and repaired afterwards to the ſtandard of Aſa.

Baaſha the reigning King of Iſrael, ſeeing Aſa's high proſperity and ſucceſs, ſeized upon the City of Ramah, and began fortifying it, he thought it a valuable and important poſt, where he could place a guard, and prevent a communication between the two Kingdoms ſo injurious to his own. Aſa was at this time ſuffering under a ſevere bodily illneſs, racked by a painful fit of the gout, and his conduct has been palliated by his ſufferings and impatience under it. Aſa forwarded an Embaſſy to the City of Damaſcus, and preſented to Benhadad, a valuable and ſacrilegious gift, of all the gold and ſilver in the Treaſury of the Temple, and he aſked his aſſiſtance againſt Iſrael. Aſa wrote him to this effect. A league is yet ſubſiſting between me and thee, and

between

between my Father and thine; I here preſent thee with gold and ſilver, come and break thy league with Baaſha King of Iſrael; Benhadad, the Syrian Prince accepted his preſents, and ſent an Army to the northern parts of the Kingdom of Iſrael, which were the neareſt to Damaſcus, but moſt remote from thoſe parts where Baaſha was employed, and he ſmote the Cities of Ijon and Dan, with thoſe in their neighbourhood, and all the land of Naphthali—upon which Baaſha deſiſted from his fortifications of Ramah, and went to defend his own Kingdom, and he drove off with ſpeed to Tirzah his Capital. As ſoon as " Baaſha had left Ramah, Aſa aſſembled all his People, none were exempted, and they took away the very ſtones of Ramah, and all the timber, and Aſa built two other Cities with them, Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah.

Upon the King's firſt application to Benhadad, Hanani the Prophet went immediately to the Palace, and he put Aſa in mind of his many former conqueſts, and that, very ſignal one, over the mighty Hoſt of Ethiopia, and prophetically told him, henceforth he ſhould have war, his confidence in Syria was ill placed, for he well knew, his addreſſes and pious applications to God had hitherto been always anſwered; " the eyes of the " Lord (the Prophet ſaid) ran too and fro in the

" earth

" earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in behalf of thoſe " who rely on him; herein thou hadſt done fool- " iſhly." On ſo grave and very ſerious a rebuke the King grew warm, and he ordered the Prophet under confinement in the priſon-houſe.

Aſa reigned three years after, but during the whole time he was languiſhing under a painful ſwelling and gout in his feet, and it is recorded of him (as blamable) that during his whole diſeaſe, he did not addreſs himſelf to God, but to the Phyſicians only.

Aſa died in the forty-firſt year of his Reign, his body was embalmed, and they laid him on a bed of ſtate, and covered him with ſpices and odoriferous perfumes, and afterwards magnificently buried him in his own Sepulchre, in the City of David, in Jeruſalem.

JEHOSOPHAT.

IN the thirty-fifth year of his age, Jehoſophat Son of Aſa, aſcended the Throne of Judah. In the year of the World 3087, and nine hundred and ſeventeen years before the birth of our Saviour.

Jehoram the eldeſt Son of this Prince, was highly pleaſed with the perſon of one of the Daughters of Ahab, King of Iſrael, and his Father gave his conſent to his making her a propoſal of Marriage.

Jehoram joyfully repaired to the Court of Samaria, Ahab politely received him, and granted

his requeſt, Jehoram paid his addreſſes to Athaliah, and he married her; to celebrate this wedding, Ahab invited Jehoſophat to his Court, and very ſumptuouſly entertained him. Iſrael and Syria were at this time engaged in War, and Ahab had already laid ſiege to Ramoth-Gilead, (a City then in the poſſeſſion of the Syrians,) and he invited Jehoſophat his gueſt to accompany him to the Camp. The King of Judah, off his guard, moſt thoughtleſsly aſſented; a bloody battle was fought before the Town; Ahab had changed his own dreſs and diſguiſed himſelf, but he propoſed to Jehoſophat to fight in his royal robes, for (ſays he) thou art no object of the Syrians rage; thus ſignally diſtinguiſhed, Jehoſophat, by being taken for Ahab, was ſpeedily in the very heat of all the battle. He was violently perſecuted, and in the extremeſt danger; by a random ſhot, in this critical moment, Ahab was mortally wounded, furiouſly the battle raged, bleeding and dying, they held up Ahab in his chariot, to encourage his ſoldiers, and induce the Enemy (who had found him out) to believe him ſtill animating his troops, and enforcing his commands. Ahab lived only until ſun-ſet, and on his death a retreat was inſtantly ſounded; the Iſraelites conveyed his body to Samaria, and there they buried him. His chariot, ſwimming with blood, was

waſhed in the Pool of Samaria, and the dogs came and licked his blood.

Jehoſophat's unwiſe aſſent, and miſtaken conduct, was ſoon noticed and reproved, upon his return to Jeruſalem the Prophet Jehu was ſent to him, he gravely repreſented to the King, the error he had fallen into, how very improper it was in him to be aiding and aſſiſting thoſe, who profeſſed themſelves the Enemies of God. But notwithſtanding (the Prophet added) he was directed to tell him, God would forgive and accept him, becauſe he had taken away the Idolatrous Groves, and his heart was not alienated from his ſervice; ſo very kind and gentle a reproof won upon the pious King, he ſet about clearing his whole Kingdom of all their idols and groves, and he went himſelf from Beer-ſheba, even to Mount Ephraim, the two extremities of his Kingdom, and exhorted all his ſubjects to the true worſhip of God, and the King ſent Levites round to every Town and City in his Kingdom, with correct copies of the law, and the five books of Moſes.

On Jehoſophat's return to Jeruſalem, he reviſed himſelf all his laws, civil and religious, publick and private, fortified his Cities, and garriſoned them, and he regulated and eſtabliſhed an exact

œconomy

œconomy throughout all his family and houſe-hold.

It was in the latter end of his reign, that the Moabites and Ammonites were confederates, and with a vaſt and formidable Army, they invaded Judæa, and proceeded as far as Engedi, within thirty-ſix miles of his Capital; Jehoſophat very wiſely and devoutly addreſſed himſelf to God, he began with proclaiming throughout all his King-dom, a general faſt. He called a council from among the Elders and Heads of all his People, and ſummoned his Nobles to Jeruſalem. The King officiated himſelf in the ſervices of the Temple, publickly and devoutly worſhipping God, with all his People, and God by his Prophet Jehaziel, was graciouſly pleaſed to aſſure him of ſucceſs and deliverance, and ſo ſpeedy, it ſhould happen on the very next day. Thus encouraged at day-break, Jehoſophat aroſe and begun his march, when the Army came near Takon, he commanded them to halt, and the King there made a highly animating and pathetic ſpeech to all his People, ending with a ſure promiſe of Glory and Victory, would they but place a firm reliance and truſt in God.

In the front of his Army, Jehoſophat placed a row of ſingers, and muſicians, directing them all when

when the trumpets blew up, with heart and voice to burſt out into one grand chorus. " Praiſe ye " the Lord, for He is good, His mercy endureth " for ever." When this Anthem was ſtruck up, on hearing the Jewiſh muſic and the voices, the Enemy were ſo aſtoniſhed, all was terror and alarm, a phrenſy and general panick ran through all their Camp, furious and frantic, they fell upon one another, the Moabites and Ammonites, ſlaughtering and killing each other. A victory was thus obtained, and Judah had not drawn a ſword.

Jehoſophat as ſoon as ever he arrived at the field, found it covered over with the dead bodies of the ſlain, and the ſpoils were more than they could carry off; three whole days they gathered it, and on the fourth they aſſembled all together, returning thanks to God, their Almighty Deliverer.

Jehoſophat, with his victorious Army, in high feſtivity, entered Jeruſalem in triumph. The remainder of his life was peace uninteruptedly enjoyed.

The King now employed his People at home, in naval occupations, and he built ten ſhips to ſail to Tarſhiſh, and thence to Ophir to bring back

back gold. Ahaziah Son of Ahab, was then King of Iſrael, and he was very deſirous of joining with Jehoſophat, in the advantages of this traffick and ſea voyages, but the good King having been warned, and already chaſtiſed by God for this ſin, ſhewed the ſincerity of his repentance, by not ſuffering himſelf to be perſuaded to repeat it.

During the four laſt years of Jehoſophat's reign, the King admitted his eldeſt Son to ſhare with him, the honours of his Government, at the end of thoſe four years, he died in his Palace at Jeruſalem, and left Jehoram ſole Regent, King of Judah.

A very magnificent tomb is ſtill ſhewn in the Valley of Jehoſophat, cut out of a ſolid rock, divided into ſeveral apartments, in one of which, is ſeen his tomb, with a ſtately portico, and an entablature over it.

HERE ENDS THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS.

JEHORAM

SECOND BOOK OF KINGS.

JEHORAM.

UPON the death of Jehoſophat, Jehoram his Son at the age of thirty-two, was proclaimed King of Judah. Eight hundred and ninety two years before the birth of Chriſt, and in the year of the World, 3112.

Jehoram now reigned alone, and having loſt the wiſe, religious reſtraint, and good advice of his Father, this young Prince became a ſlave to

prejudice

prejudice and paſſion, and exhibited a diſpoſition and conduct, moſt unnatural, and unlike his Anceſtors.

The reign of Jehoram, proved ſhort, but it was full of ignominy and diſhonour; the connection he had formed in early life, at the age of ſeventeen, with the impious and idolatrous daughter of Ahab, King of Iſrael, proved a ſad ſource of family ſorrow and diſgrace, as this unhappy Prince, gave himſelf up entirely to the guidance of the Queen, a ſlave to her impiety, and all her odious abominations. Jehoram was not contented to become himſelf an Idolater, but he uſed his power and royal authority, to compel all his ſubjects to a like worſhip. His Reign was diſtinguiſhingly wicked and abandoned, unnaturally baſe, cruel and bloody. His Nobles, he wantonly murdered at pleaſure, and aſſaſſinated no leſs than ſix young Princes, his own Brothers who by the wiſe appointment of his Father, occupied poſts of honour, were Governors of Cities and liberally provided for by Government. Such groſs impiety, and very criminal conduct, was not long unnoticed, a ſignal and very extraordinary puniſhment ſoon overtook Jehoram. Elijah the Prophet, wrote the King a letter, and ſent it to the Palace, informing him, his deviation from the ways of his pious Anceſtors, and

the cruel murder of his own Brothers (who were far more virtuous characters than himſelf) was highly diſpleaſing to God, and it had brought down upon him His vengeance; the plague ſhould now rage in Judæa, and deſtroy his ſubjects, a painful and incurable diſeaſe very ſhortly afflict himſelf; Jehoram endured the excrutiating torments of a bloody flux two years, at the end of which time, his bowels guſhed out, and the King in great agony expired. After his death, his royal Palace was plundered, his Wives and all his Sons carried away captive, except Ahaziah his youngeſt.

After Jehoram had reigned eight years, he died deſpiſed and unlamented. Without honour or even any ſhew of pomp or royalty he was buried privately in the Sepulchre of the Kings of Judah, and in the City of David.

AHAZIAH,

AT the age of two and twenty, this young Prince ſucceeded his Father Jehoram. In the year of the World, 3120, and eight hundred and eighty-five years before the birth of our Saviour.

Ahaziah was a Son of Jehoram's by Athaliah Daughter of the King of Iſrael, and he was therefore a Son-in-law of the houſe of Ahab.

During a Reign of only one year, little is recorded of this young Prince, except a very un-uſual and affectionate attachment to Jehoram,

the

the reigning King of Iſrael, together with his ſudden death by order of Jehu, when that Prince was executing the vengeance of the Almighty on all the family of Ahab.

Soon after his proclamation and the ceremonies of his coronation in Jeruſalem, Ahaziah ſet out on a viſit to his Uncle, at the Court of Samaria. Jehoram in a bloody battle, he had lately fought, received a deep and dangerous wound, which confined him ſome months to his bed; Ahaziah bore him company all the time, reſpectfully attending upon him in perſon, alleviating his hours of ſickneſs and pain, by daily intercourſe and moſt friendly ſympathy; a ſingular and very ſtriking feature in the very ſhort reign of this young Prince.

It was ſoon after Jehoram's recovery, when the two Kings were of a party together, the King of Iſrael was ſlain by Jehu, one of his General-Officers, and Jehu ſent a detachment from his Troops to overtake Ahaziah; highly alarmed Ahaziah had croſſed over a private road, which led through a garden not far from Megiddo, where he was overtaken, carried firſt to Samaria and afterwards ſlain at Megiddo.

The body of the King was from thence carried by his ſervants to Jeruſalem, and laid in the royal

royal Sepulchre. Ahaziah had aſcended the throne of Judah only one year, and he left an infant Son, named Joaſh, who was concealed, together with his nurſe in a bed-chamber in the Temple, and afterwards crowned in Jeruſalem.

ATHALIAH,

THE Daughter of Ahab, and Mother of Ahaziah, at this time Queen Dowager of Judah, uſurped the Government in the year of the World, 3121, and eight hundred and eighty-four years before the birth of our Saviour.

The ſad ſcene of bloodſhed and diſtraction now at this period, with the fate of the Royal Families of both Iſrael and Judah, cannot be read without horror and weeping; Ahab's offſpring all cut off for their idolatry, and the

3121.

unfor-

unfortunate and ill-judged affinity of Jehoram, occaſioned a total deſtruction, by three ſucceſſive maſſacres, of the blood royal of Judah, one ſmall branch only excepted, and he an infant in his nurſes arms. Good Jehoſophat piouſly wiſhed this union and family compact might have united the two Kingdoms under one head, and one religion, but it proved the ſad ſource of the very foreſt calamities. Athaliah reſolved David's family ſhould not outlive Ahab's, and ſhe murdered all the blood royal, utterly to extinguiſh the race of Jehoſophat, and ſecure, firſt for herſelf, and afterwards for her children, the Throne of Judah. Athaliah was thus glutting her revenge for the murder of all her Father Ahab's Family, and providing for her own defence againſt the perſecution of Jehu, who had waded his way to the throne of Iſrael through the blood of three royal Princes, ſeventy Sons of Ahab, and all who were connected or related to the family. Jehu was employed as the rod of the Almighty, to execute his vengeance on the houſe of Ahab, and bring about this deſtruction of his family, and total revolution in the Empire.

Athaliah was, no doubt, viewing the death and extirpation of her family with horror, and the Queen gloried in the means of indulging her revenge.

From

From amidſt the bloody and horrid ſlaughter at Jeruſalem, an infant of a year old, was ſecreted by his Aunt Jehoſheba, Siſter to Ahaziah, and Daughter of Jehoram King of Judah, this Princeſs was married to Jehoida the High-Prieſt, and ſhe, unknown to Athaliah, contrived firſt to hide him in a bed-chamber, and then convey him and his nurſe, out of the Palace, to an apartment in the Temple, and the young Prince continued thus ſecreted under the care of his Uucle and Aunt ſix years, and in the ſeventh, the High-Prieſt ſummoned a council, concerted all his plans, with great judgment and privacy aſſembled the Nobles, Prieſts, Levites and Elders, and intereſted them all in favour of the young Prince, and the intended revolution, God (he ſaid) was not unmindful of his promiſes to Judah. Jehoida then named a day for a publick meeting, and before the whole aſſembly, he produced Joaſh the young Prince, and cauſed every perſon preſent to take the oath of allegiance to him. The High-Prieſt had collected a large quantity of arms and he now ſupplied all the People with weapons of every ſort, and thus accoutred, he divided them into three parties, one of which he appointed to act as Body-Guard to the perſon of the young Prince, and Jehoida now in the preſence of all the People, placed the Crown upon the head of Joaſh, and the book of the law in his hand

hand, with theſe enſigns of juſtice and royalty, he anointed him, and with ſound of trumpets, martial muſic and loud acclamations, Joaſh was proclaimed King of Judah. The Queen alarmed at the ſhouts, acclamations, and ſound of trumpets, left her Palace, ſhe ran haſtily to the Temple, and to the porch belonging to the Prieſts, from whence ſhe ruſhed into the midſt of the aſſembly, in ſurprize and aſtoniſhment ſhe beheld the infant King, with the Crown on his head, as he ſtood againſt a pillar, and the Nobles and Trumpeters around him, ſhouting, and blowing the trumpets; Athaliah roared out, Treaſon!— Treaſon!— in furious diſtraction ſhe rent her hair, ſhe rent her garments and ſhe wept aloud; Jehoida commanded the Guard to ſeize the Queen's Perſon, and convey her out of the Temple, and ſlay all and every one who ſhould attempt to reſcue her. The ſoldiers dragged her to an outer-gate, and there they ſlew Athaliah. She had tyranized over Judah ſix years, and the ſtreets of Jeruſalem had long been ſtreaming with blood.

Jehoida, the High-Prieſt, now Viceroy and inveſted with the Supreme Authority, entered into a covenant with the People, and bound them by a moſt ſolemn engagement to ſerve the Lord, and he made another covenant between the infant

King

King and his ſubjects. Jehoida then ſet out on a journey through the Kingdom, and in perſon aſſiſted in pulling down and deſtroying all the images, demoliſhing their Altars and Temples, and with his own hands, as if divinely inſpired, Jehoida ſlew Mattan, the High-Prieſt of Baal.

Jehoida purified the Temple at Jeruſalem, from the corruptions and abominations which had crept into it, and he ſettled the young King in the royal Palace, after he had with ſo much ſpirit and bravery put him in poſſeſſion of his Kingdom.

In this very ſignal manner, the providence of God, preſerved the race of his ſervant David, when in danger of a total extinction.

J O A S H,

IN the year of the World, 3127, and eight hundred and ſeventy-eight years before Chriſt; at ſeven years of age, this young Prince began his Reign, and his Mother's name was Zibiah of Beer-ſheba.

Jehoida was Regent, in both religious and civil affairs, and he filled the poſts of dignity and office, with his wife and brave aſſiſtants in the revolution, he reſtored the purity of the Worſhip of God, and the ſtated ſacrifices and ſolemnities of the Temple.

Joaſh grew up religious and grateful, unweariedly zealous in the Worſhip of God, during all the life time of his Uncle, the High-Prieſt—He called to mind, that he owed his very ſignal

preſervation to God, He had raiſed him to the Throne of Judah, to be a guardian to the Temple, and a reſtorer of its ſervices and Worſhip. The Sons of Athaliah had impiouſly profaned it, broke up its Treaſury, and wantonly defaced the building, and the King repaired the breaches, and raiſed a fund to defray the expence.

The life of Jehoida was lengthened out to the age of one hundred and thirty, and on account of his many and ſignal ſervices, his royal connections, and very amiable and worthy character, he was buried with the Kings of Judah, in the royal Sepulchre at Jeruſalem.

At the death of the High-Prieſt, the Princes and Jewiſh Nobles aſſembled, and came in a body to the Palace, and on being admitted to the King, they reſpectfully and ſubmiſſively paid him homage, and offered up a petition to the throne, requeſting leave to return to the worſhip of their former Gods, to ſet up their images, and bow down to Baal. Joaſh indolent and unguarded, weakly and moſt unwiſely granted their petition. New Altars were inſtantly raiſed, new Idols made, their worſhip again introduced in all the high places and the groves, with their abominable and moſt execrable ceremonies. The Prophets inſtantly noticed the defection, and ſtrenuouſly

forewarned them of the ſad miſeries, ſuch conduct would aſſuredly bring both on King and People, wiſely repreſenting the baſeneſs and high ingratitude of their idolatry—Judah was deaf to all admonition, and God permitted Hazael, King of Syria, with fire and ſword to invade Judæa, and it was in the midſt of their abominations and impiety, the Hebrews were all delivered into his hands. Hazael forwarded all his rich ſpoils to Damaſcus, and marched his Army up to Jeruſalem, plundering and ſlaughtering throughout every City; Joaſh ſtript the Temple, and his royal Palace, of their immenſe riches and magnificent furniture, and gave them all a ranſom to the Syrian Conqueror; Hazael thereupon returned back, and (elated with his high honours) entered Damaſcus in triumph; Joaſh was at that time, ſeverely ſuffering under a bodily diſeaſe, but it had not yet endangered his life, he was murdered in his bed by Zadab and Jehozadab, two of his ſervants, at the head of a conſpiracy at home. Joaſh had reigned forty years in Jeruſalem, and they buried him in the royal Sepulchre in the City of David.

AMAZIAH.

AMAZIAH.

THIS young Prince, the Son of Joaſh, at his Father's death, aſcended the Throne, and was crowned in Jeruſalem, eight hundred and thirty-eight years before the birth of Chriſt, and in the year of the World, 3167.

Soon after his coronation, Amaziah called a council from his Nobles, and Heads of his People, and he cauſed the two murderers of his Father to be brought before him, and ordered them to a publick execution. This was the young King's wiſe, and firſt exertion of his power. The commencement of his Reign was diſtinguiſhed for piety, and by many glorious victories, he maintained an Army of three hundred thouſand men, and he took into his pay, a hundred thouſand more of Iſrael, at a time he was marching

a powerful

a powerful Army againſt Edom, but a little before he entered their Country, Amaziah thinking his own Army ſufficiently powerful, he diſmiſſed all the Iſraelites, and ſent them home.

Amaziah's expedition againſt Edom, was highly ſucceſsful; he returned laden with riches and ſpoils, but amongſt his other treaſure, he brought with him the Images and Idols of the Edomites, and now intoxicated with the honours and glory of his ſucceſs, Amaziah cauſed them to be ſet up in Jeruſalem, and he burnt incenſe himſelf before them. Fruitleſs, and all in vain, were the reproofs and exhortations of the Prophets, no reaſoning would reclaim Amaziah, and God left him to the ſufferings and ſad effects of his impiety.

As the hundred thouſand Troops (which had been hired by the King) were paſſing back through the Towns and Cities of Judah, diſappointed and angry at their diſmiſſion, they pilfered, plundered and laid waſte the Country. Amaziah elated by his late Victories, and now in the moment of Triumph, heard of their conduct with much diſpleaſure, and inſtantly reſolved to revenge the damages, his people and his cities had ſuſtained. Self-confident and vain, Amaziah ſent a Challenge to the

King

King of Iſrael, and he haughtily ſaid, " Come let us look one another in the face" The anſwer returned by Joas, was couched in ſovereign diſdain; it (was familiar with the Jews, to wrap up their language in Allegory) and Joas wrote him, " The Thiſtle that was in Lebanon ſent to the Cedar that was in Lebanon, ſaying, " give thy Daughter to my Son to wife," and there paſſed by a wild beaſt and trod down the Thiſtle, with no leſs eaſe ſhall my ſoldiers tread down thee and thy Army; Amaziah fired with the inſult, haſtily marched with all his Forces to meet Joas, but the Army of Judah was totally defeated, and Amaziah taken priſoner, the King of Iſrael led his victorious Troops all through Judæa, entered Jeruſalem in triumph, he broke down four hundred cubits of its ſtrong Walls, and ſome of its ſtrongeſt Towers and Fortifications, plundered the Temple and royal Palaces; laden with its treaſures and his ſpoils, and as many hoſtages as he choſe to demand, He left Amaziah at Jeruſalem and marched his Army back to Samaria, enjoying the high honours of a ſecond Triumph.

After this ſore diſgrace and total defeat, Amaziah, lived fifteen years in Jeruſalem, at that time his Nobles formed a Conſpiracy to take away his life, upon which, he fled to La-

chiſh, a City on the Frontiers of Judah, he did not eſcape the ſnares they had lain for him, they purſued him to Lachiſh, and Amaziah was there put to death.

His ſervants laid his Body acroſs a horſe, without ſtate, or even decency, and they placed him in the royal Sepulchre, in the City of David in Jeruſalem.

U Z Z I A H.

AT the age of ſixteen, this amiable young Prince, ſucceeded Amaziah his Father. In the year of the World, three thouſand one hundred and ninety-ſix, and eight hundred and nine years before Chriſt. King Uzziah was crowned at Jeruſalem.

In the early part of this Prince's reign, he was diſtinguiſhed for his piety and religious Zeal, pious himſelf, and well adviſed, he promoted the worſhip of God throughout all his Kingdom. God was pleaſed to bleſs and proſper his reign, many were his honours and much his ſucceſs, he engaged the Philiſtine Army, the Arabs and the Ammonites, and he returned victorious from them all. Uzziah, watchful over the proſperity of Jeruſalem, repaired the Wall the Iſraelitiſh King had ſo inſultingly broken down, and he fortified it with Turrets and ſtrong Towers, adding greatly to its ſecurity, and they were advantageous poſts of aſſault. Uzziah, conſtructed Machines in them for throwing darts, ſtones, and other deſtructive weapons from the Bulwarks, the Machinery afforded a wonderful proof of the progreſs, and dexterity of the Engineers, of that period. In many of his Cities, as well as at Jeruſalem, Uzziah, erected large ſtore-houſes, and he ſupplied them with all neceſſaries, and with Arms and implements of War. This Prince, applied himſelf to the ſtudy of Agriculture as a ſcience, and grew wealthy from his over-abounding Crops. He fed very numerous Herds of Cattle, and he dug wells every where to ſupply them. Uzziah planted many Vine-yards, and built cots for all his huſbandmen, and Vine-dreſſers. In time of

Peace, he was thus uſefully and happily employed, but Uzziah's higheſt glory was in Arms. He maintained an Army of two thouſand ſix hundred brave officers, all men of war, and three hundred and ſeven thouſand five hundred ſoldiers, completely armed.

In high proſperity, pious, innocent, and happy, Uzziah reigned three and thirty years, during the life time of a truly eminent and wiſe man, named Zachariah, who had been his favourite adviſer and friend, but after the death of this faithful and worthy counſellor, Uzziah's ambition, having no friendly eye to check it, his high honours and dignities ſo elated him, that he would oſtentatiouſly burn incenſe himſelf, upon the Altar before the Lord, the High-Prieſt and fourſcore other Prieſts all followed the King to the Temple, and there moſt reſpectfully told him, it was their office only to burn the Incenſe, an office ſolemnly allotted to the Sons of Aaron, the King unuſed to oppoſition and impatient of reproof, in a moment of warmth and vanity, the cenſer in his hand, held it up in an angry threat, and Uzziah was inſtantly ſtruck with a leproſy, the High-Prieſt was the firſt who ſpied it in his forehead, thus degraded and polluted, a loathſome leper, the King walked ſilently out of the Temple, and through the City, quite beyond the

gates

gates, to a lone houſe in the fields, as no leper, be he ever ſo highly ranked, was ever admitted to live within the City Walls.

From this moſt horrid diſeaſe, Uzziah never afterwards recovered, the remainder of his life was paſſed only by himſelf. A puniſhment wiſely calculated to convince him of his crime, as it rendered him incapable of attending on publick Worſhip ever after.

Under the title of Viceroy, Jotham his Son took upon him the adminiſtration until the death of his Father. Uzziah reigned two and fifty years, and then died at the age of ſixty-eight, and they buried him in the field, where the royal Sepulchres were built, but a leper was always placed apart, and by himſelf, at a wide diſtance from his Anceſtors.

JOTHAM.

SINCE the disgrace and sufferings of his Father, this young Prince had been invested with the Supreme Authority under the title of Viceroy.

Jotham was now proclaimed King of Judah, and he was at the age of twenty-five, his Mother's name was Jerusha, and of the family of Zadoc.

In the year of the World, 3248, and seven hundred and fifty-seven years before the coming of our Saviour.

Jotham was a wise, powerful, and religious Prince, inheriting all his Father's virtues, without the sad and destructive allay of ambition and vanity, and Uzziah himself seemed only to have acquired

acquired it in the latter period of his reign, when he had loſt his wiſe adviſer, and was blinded by the too glaring luſtre and honours of royalty.

A magnificent, beautiful new gate, was now built to the Temple, and Jotham erected many other ſuperb ſtructures, both for ornament and uſe; this Prince was a ſpirited and valiant Commander, he engaged the Ammonites in ſeveral battles, and made them tributary to Judah, and they brought every year to Jeruſalem, one hundred talents of ſilver, ten thouſand meaſures of wheat, and a like quantity of barley.

Jotham was his own General, headed his Troops, and marched in perſon with his Army. He returned victorious from all his expeditions, and never loſt a battle. He fought with Rezin, King of Syria, and Pekah King of Iſrael, but the union of theſe two kingdoms, and their confederacy againſt Judah, did not fall out until the reign of Ahaz his Son.

At the end of a proſperous and glorious reign of ſixteen years, King Jotham died, aged only forty-one, and was buried with his Fathers in the City of David, in Jeruſalem.

AHAZ

AHAZ.

THIS young Prince had only attained to the age of twenty, when at the Death of his Father, he aſcended the Throne of Judah; in the year of the World, three thouſand, two hundred ſixty-three, and ſeven hundred and forty-one years before Chriſt.

Ahaz was a Prince ſo ill principled, abandoned and wicked, that he totally degenerated from the piety of his Anceſtors, and cauſed to be made a number of molten Images, ſacrificing and burning incenſe on the high places, the hills, and the groves, and under every green tree, where he had impiouſly ſet up his Idols and his Gods. At Hinnon, in the very neighbourhood of his Metropolis, he commanded his own Son to paſs through the fire, conforming to the ſuperſtitious rites, and worſhip of the Heathens, the original Inhabitants

of Canaan, whom God for thoſe very abominations, and acts of impiety, had extirpated root and branch from thence.

It was at this time, a confederate Alliance took place between Syria and Iſrael, they united their forces, and marched them into Judæa, and laid ſiege to Jeruſalem.

Ahaz was ſorely alarmed and altogether unprepared; while he ſtood trembling and in high conſternation, Iſaiah the Prophet, entered the Palace, and requeſted an audience with the King. The two powerful Armies of Syria and Iſrael had ſurrounded the City Walls, and threatened a total overthrow of the Empire; in this moment of diſtraction and diſpair, the Prophet mildly told Ahaz, "Your Enemies will try their ſtrength in vain," and to gain his confidence, Iſaiah deſired him (as was the cuſtom of the times) to aſk a ſign from God; any proof whatſoever you ſhall now require, God will grant it you; either out of reſpect or deſpondency, Ahaz, would aſk nothing.

The King appeared ſullen and diſconſolate, and the Prophet in order to comfort him, and convince him of the truth of his Meſſage kindly

kindly condeſcends to reaſon with Ahaz, and reminded him of the well-known prediction of Jacob, that the ſceptre ſhould not depart from Judah, until Shiloh (the right owner) meaning the Meſſiah ſhould come; and the Prophet then moſt expreſsly added, before Jeruſalem be deſtroyed, a Virgin ſhould conceive and bear a Son, and his Name Immanuel, God with us, and the Prophet appealed to the King, if as yet, either of theſe had happened.

The confederate Kings, after they, and their Armies, had fruitleſsly ſurrounded Jeruſalem, plainly ſaw all their attempts would be ineffectual, chagrined and diſappointed, they marched their Armies back, wantonly plundering and cruelly treating all the inhabitants through the Towns, and Cities, and Country they paſſed along. Rezin, the Syrian Prince, laden with jewiſh Spoils entered Damaſcus his Capital in triumph, and Pekah King of Iſrael put to the Sword one hundred and twenty thouſand Men, and carried away captive two hundred thouſand Women and Children.

Great and ſad were his loſſes, and the horrors of his late alarm; notwithſtanding, Ahaz, gave himſelf wholly up to his heatheniſh Abominations, and Idolatry. He had ſeen the

ſuggeſtions

ſuggeſtions of the Prophet in ſome meaſure verified, he had loſt in one battle, one hundred and twenty thouſand of his braveſt Troops, beſides his own Son Maaſeiah, the Maſter of his houſehold, and Elkanah the third in authority in Judah, and numbers of the People, who had been carried away captive. Yet Ahaz ſtill publickly ſacrificed to the Gods of Damaſcus, alledging, this as a reaſon, the proſperity of Syria was owing to their Worſhip and their Gods. In open defiance, or at leaſt in diſtruſt of the God of Iſrael, Ahaz called in foreign aid to his aſſiſtance, he was ſtill ſorely oppreſſed and perſecuted by Syria, upon which the King ſent an Embaſſy to Tiglath-Pileſer, King of Aſſyria, and he accompanied it with a royal preſent of all the money, both in his own Treaſury, and in the Treaſury of the Temple, and he ſaid, "I am thy Servant and thy Son;" I yield myſelf to thee, to ſerve, obey, and pay thee tribute, upon condition thou come up, and ſave me from the hands of my enemies. The Aſſyrian Prince accepted his preſent and propoſals, he marched with his Army againſt Damaſcus, and took it, and Rezín the Syrian King was there ſlain. Upon this ſucceſsful enterprize, Ahaz went up to Damaſcus to meet the Conqueror, and congratulate him on his Victory, making him high acknowledgments for his favour and aſſiſtance, while Ahaz was on

this viſit, he was wonderfully ſtruck with a Syrian Altar he there ſaw, of a beautiful ſtructure, and he ſent a pattern of it to Urijah his High-Prieſt at Jeruſalem, and commanded him to cauſe an Altar to be built of that faſhion againſt his return. Urijah obeyed the orders of his Sovereign, the Altar, according to the model ſent, was completed, and Ahaz offered up incenſe himſelf upon it, and a vaſt number of heatheniſh ſacrifices; very ſoon after, the King put a ſtop to the daily ſervices of the Temple, and he ſhut it up, new Altars after the Syrian Model were ſet up in every corner of Jeruſalem, to the honour of the Gods of Damaſcus.

With ſuch infamous and abominable depravity, this Idolatrous Prince uninterruptedly adhered to the Syrian Worſhip, to their Idols and their Gods. Ahaz finiſhed a miſerable reign in the thirty-ſixth year of his age, and ſixteen years after he had aſcended the throne of Judah.

He was buried in Jeruſalem, in a place by himſelf, as the Elders and Nobles of Judah did not think him worthy of being interred in the magnificent Sepulchre of his Anceſtors.

ESSAY XIV.

CONCLUSION OF THE REIGNS OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

HEZEKIAH.
MANASSEH.
AMON.
JOSIAH.

JEHOAHAZ.
JEHOIAKIM.
JEHOIACHIN and
ZEDEKIAH.

HEZEKIAH.

AHAZ was ſucceeded by his Son Hezekiah. This Prince was in the twenty-fifth year of his age, his Mother's name was Abi, and ſhe was Daughter of Zachariah. A Princeſs of true piety, who in the midſt of a corrupt and moſt abandoned Court, had attended to the principles, morals, and religious education of her Son.

In the year of the World, 3278, and ſeven hundred and twenty-ſix years before the birth of our Saviour.

This amiable, and beſt of Princes, was well acquainted with the ſad ſources of Judah's misfortunes, he therefore in right earneſt, and with religious zeal, ſet about retrieving them. Heze-

kiah wiſely begun with opening the Temple, and re-inſtating the Prieſts and Levites in their office, enforcing both by his authority, and example, the conſtant daily worſhip of God, according to the Law of Moſes. He began on the firſt day of the new year, and it was the Sabbath, the whole ſervice was then prepared and completed. The King aſſembled all his Elders and Nobles, the Princes and Chiefs of the Tribe of Judah, the Prieſts and Levites, and all his People, they formed a grand proceſſion, and moved towards the Temple, the air reſounding with the ſolemn blaſt of trumpets, and loud ſounding cymbals, a band of ſacred muſic, and men-ſingers and women-ſingers chanting Pſalms, and Hymns of praiſe, in full Majeſtic chorus. The Jewiſh ancient muſic, accompanied the voices all through the Temple, which re-echoed with the ſhouts, and general joy of King and People, devotionally employed in prayer and praiſe.

Hezekiah aſſiſted at the Altar, and with true piety, witneſſed the ſolemnities of ſacrifice, and offered up, for the ſins of all his People, peace-offerings without number.

A whole Nation thus devoutly engaged in aboliſhing Idolatry, with reverence joining heart and voice

voice in thankſgivings to God, muſt have been a ſight full of joy and ſatisfaction.

Hezekiah, liberal and wiſe, was unwilling to confine the religious exerciſes, and worſhip of God, to his own Kingdom, he wrote himſelf a ſerious and pathetic letter, to all the Iſraelites in the neighbouring Provinces, reproving them for their Idolatry, the ſad and evident ſource of their ſufferings, and in order to a reformation of that deluded and unhappy Kingdom, he earneſtly exhorted them to the true worſhip of God, and invited them all to keep the next Paſs-over Feaſt with him, in the Temple at Jeruſalem, and very many of them actually came.

Inſpired by the piety, and animating example of their Prince, the People were all reſolute and active in demoliſhing Idols, Altars, every heatheniſh monument and grove, in, and about Jeruſalem, and the whole City was altogether cleared. Hezekiah removed the Groves and High Places, which none of his predeceſſors before, had influence or reſolution enough to do. He next made an exact ſcrutiny into the genealogie of the Prieſts, and Levites, and eſtabliſhed their ſeveral claſſes, after the model of David, and the King provided largely for the maintenance of them all.

As

As ſoon as he found himſelf ſufficiently powerful, he freed Judah from the annual tribute paid to the King of Aſſyria, and re-aſſumed that independent Sovereignty, God had ſettled in the houſe of David. Hezekiah marched with his Army againſt the Philiſtines, and recovered all the Cities they had taken from Judah, during the unhappy reign of Ahaz his Father.

Senna-Cherib, King of Aſſyria, contented himſelf with receiving the Jewiſh tribute as long as it was paid, but on its being withheld, he marched into Judæa at the head of a numerous Army, he laid ſiege to all the fortified Cities and Towns he paſſed through, and threatened a total deſtruction to the Empire.

Hezekiah was ſadly diſtreſſed, and now all ſubmiſſion, the King ſaw his error, but it was too late, the Aſſyrian Prince had fixed his head quarters at Lachiſh, Hezekiah forwarded an Embaſſy, and accompanied it with the richeſt preſents, ſtripping both his Palace and the Temple to furniſh them, he promiſed a full and unequivocal aſſent to whatſoever terms his Aſſyrian Majeſty ſhould think proper to impoſe. The Haughty Conqueror demanded three hundred talents of ſilver, and thirty talents of gold. Senna-Cherib, then only ordered his Troops

back

back to Lachiſh, and permitted them ſtill to ravage on the frontiers of Judah.

It was not long before he diſpatched from hence, Tartan, Rabſaris and Rabſhakeh, three General Officers, with a powerful Army again to lay ſiege to Jeruſalem.

Hezekiah had buſily employed himſelf, made a brave defence, fortified the City, repaired the walls, built a ſecond wall all round it, fenced it with Towers, collected a large ſtore of proviſions dried up all the ſprings in the ſuburbs, and turned the Brook Gihon into the City, to deprive the enemy as much as poſſible of all ſupplies, and pour in plenty of water into Jeruſalem. After theſe wiſe and vigorous meaſures for enduring a ſiege, Hezekiah ſummoned his Council, his Officers, and Generals, and in an able and pious ſpeech encouraged them to fortitude, becoming valour, and devout reliance on God.

At the very preſſing, and earneſt requeſt of his Nobles and People, Hezekiah had aſſented to forward an Embaſſy to Ethiopia, aſking their aſſiſtance in this his great extremity and deep diſtreſs, a numerous Army was immediately ſent for the relief of Jeruſalem, but they were all routed and cut to pieces by Senna-Cherib, and with ſo horrible

horrible a ſlaughter, no one was left even to bury the dead.

The three Aſſyrian Captains, inſultingly parading, and ſurveying the City, ſtood by the Conduit of the upper Pool, in the Highway, and made ſigns for a conference with the King. Hezekiah, ſorely alarmed, ſent three confidential Servants, the Steward of his houſehold, his Secretary, and Joaſh, the Son of Aſaph his Recorder; Rab-ſhakeh, with haughty inſolence, ordered them to go carry Hezekiah this meſſage from the King of Aſſyria,

In whom placeſt thou thy truſt? Is Egypt thy ſtaff? behold he is as weak as a bruiſed reed, on which if a man lean, it will ſplinter and pierce him—but does he truſt in the Lord his God? is not that He, whoſe high places, and groves, and Altars he has burnt and deſtroyed? Hear ye, my propoſal; give pledges now to my Lord the King, and I will deliver you two thouſand horſes, but ye are ſo deſtitute of men, ye cannot even ſet riders upon them.

Am I come up without the Lord againſt Jeruſalem to deſtroy it? The Lord ſaid to me, go ye up againſt this land and deſtroy it. (How terrifying to the Jews to be told, he was executing a

commiſſion from Jehovah.) The Jewiſh Chiefs, ſhocked that the People ſhould hear ſuch language, ſubmiſſively told Rab-ſhakeh, we underſtand the Syrian tongue, I pray you ſpeak to thy ſervants, and not in the ears of all the People on the wall. He inſolently replied, are we not ſent to all the men now liſtening on the wall? (and turning from the Jewiſh Chiefs, and ſpeaking directly to the People) ſoon ſhall we reduce you to ſuch extremity, you will eat, each man his own dung for hunger—let not Hezekiah deceive you—he is not able to deliver you—he tells you to truſt in the Lord, but your City will ſurely be delivered up to us. Hearken to the King of Aſſyria. Make a league with me by a preſent—come ye out to me, and then, eat ye every man of his own Vine, and every one of his Fig-tree, and drink ye every one of the waters of his Ciſtern, until I come and take you away to a land like your own, a land of corn and wine, of bread and Vine-yards, of oil olive, and honey, that ye all may live and not die. Hath any of the Gods of the Nations delivered them out of the hands of the King of Aſſyria? Have they delivered Samaria? and do you expect deliverance for Jeruſalem?

The People all held their peace. Hezekiah had expreſsly commanded—anſwer them not.

Eliakim,

Eliakim, Shebna and Joaſh the Jewiſh Chiefs, like deep mourners, with their clothes rent, came to Hezekiah and told him all the words of Rab-ſhakeh. The King rent his clothes, in token of ſorrow, and covered himſelf with ſack-cloth, and went immediately to the Temple, and ſent the three mourning chiefs, covered with ſack-cloth, to tell the ſad ſtory to the Prophet Iſaiah. Hezekiah moſt humbly offered up to God, with all his People, an animated and very pathetic prayer, as ſoon as he had done, on ſeeing the Prophet, the King piteouſly implored his interceſſion, and prayer to God on behalf of his Country; Upon which Iſaiah revives and comforts Hezekiah. Be not afraid, for thus ſaith the Lord, behold I will ſend a blaſt upon thine enemy, he ſhall hear a rumour, and return to his own land, and fall by the Sword in his own land.

Tirkahah, King of Ethiopia, incenſed at the ill ſucceſs and loſs of his Troops, marched a powerful Army into Aſſyria; Senna-Cherib was under the neceſſity of going home, to drive him back, and defend his own territories, but before he ſet off, he wrote a moſt inſulting letter to Hezekiah, he would ſhortly return, and with redoubled fury batter down the walls of Jeruſalem. For (he told him) he ſet at nought the God of Hezekiah.

The King, under great terror and alarm, received the letter himſelf from the hand of the meſſenger and read it, then went immediately to the Temple, and there held a council with his Elders and Nobles, after which, he in the moſt humble manner proſtrated himſelf before God, and in a fervent and devout prayer, ſpread all his anxieties before him.

" O Lord God of Iſrael, bow down thine ear " and hear, open thine eyes and ſee, hear thou " the words of Senna-Cherib, his reproaches of " the living God, O Lord our God, I beſeech " thee ſave us out of his hand."

Hezekiah's pious addreſs was ſcarcely finiſhed, when he received a gracious anſwer from God, delivered by the Prophet. That although Senna-Cherib would indeed return, yet God would protect Jeruſalem. Thus ſaith the Lord God of Iſrael, that which thou haſt prayed to me concerning Senna-Cherib, I have heard, and this is the word the Lord hath ſpoken, concerning him.

" The Virgin, the Daughter of Zion hath " deſpiſed thee, and laughed thee to ſcorn. The " Daughter of Jeruſalem hath ſhaken her head at " thee (in deriſion.) Whom haſt thou reproached

" and

" and blaſphemed, even the Holy One of
" Iſrael? I know thy abode, thy going out and
" thy coming in, and thy rage is before me; be-
" cauſe thy rage and thy tumult is come up into
" mine ears—behold I will put my Hook into thy
" noſe, and my Bridle between thy lips, and I
" will turn thee back, by the way in which thou
" cameſt."

And it came to paſs that very night, (poſſibly the night preceeding a general ſtorm) the Angel of the Lord went out, and ſmote by a peſtilence, in the Aſſyrian Camp, one hundred, fourſcore, and five thouſand. At day-break on ſeeing the dead bodies filling the tents, and covering the plain, Senna-Cherib, full of ſhame and confuſion returned back ingloriouſly to Nineveh.

Thus was Jeruſalem delivered in the very moment of deſtruction, and Iſaiah's prediction reſpecting this haughty Tyrant exactly fulfilled, as was alſo the prophecy reſpecting his death, for as he was worſhipping in the Temple of his God, he was aſſaſſinated by two of his own Sons, who afterwards fled and made their eſcape out of the Kingdom.

Another viſit of the Prophets is recorded, when Hezekiah was ſick, Iſaiah forewarns the King to

ſet

ſet his affairs in order, make his will, and appoint his ſucceſſor, for he would ſurely die.

Hezekiah aſcended the Throne at twenty-five, and he was now only thirty-eight; his Kingdom was in danger; as yet he had no heir; the ſummons ſudden and alarming; the King therefore received it with inexpreſſible grief, and in a humble and devout prayer, with his face towards the wall, and in a flood of tears, he paſſionately poured out his ſoul before God. The Prophet had taken his leave, he was now in the middle Court and going out of the Palace, when he was commanded to return, and inform Hezekiah, God had heard his prayer, he ſhould recover from his diſeaſe, and in three days time, acquire ſo much health and ſtrength, as to be able to offer up publick thanks to God in the Temple, in the midſt of all his People, and more-over fifteen years longer ſhould be added to his life. The King's diſeaſe was probably a quinſey, upon the application of a fig, the tumour ripened and broke, and his cure immediately followed.

It was on this occaſion Iſaiah gave a ſignal proof of his high Prophetic office, a retrogradation of ten degrees of the ſun's ſhadow, on the dial of Ahaz, and to gain the King's confidence and comfort him the more, he left it to him to chuſe, whether

whether the ſhadow ſhould go ten degrees forward, or retire ten degrees back; the King ſaid, ſhould the ſhadow go down ten degrees, it will be leſs noticed and extraordinary, and he choſe it ſhould return backward. On the Prophet's prayer, the ſhadow on the dial of the royal Palace, was inſtantly brought ten degrees back.

Under the grateful impreſſions of ſo merciful a providence, Hezekiah compoſed a divine Ode, expreſſive of his own anguiſh of ſoul, and the infinite goodneſs of his God.

This beſt of Princes, too much elated by ſo many bleſſings and deliverances, with which God had diſtinguiſhingly honoured him, and now opulent and very powerful, enriched with the ſpoils of his enemies, and in the full enjoyment of his bleſſings, Berodach-baladan, the Son of the King Babylon, ſent preſents and letters of congratulation to Hezekiah on his recovery, and he noticed the amazing prodigy of the Sun's retrogreſſion, a phenomenon which had been obſerved, and much ſpoken of, in foreign countries, and particularly in Egypt, as the Egyptians were great aſtronomers. Hezekiah incautiouſly entertained the Ambaſſadors with a ſight of his immenſe riches, his grandeur and magnificence, the Fortifications and ſtrength of his walls, his Storehouſes

houſes and armory. Iſaiah ſaw them at the Palace, and enquired of his Majeſty who thoſe men were, Hezekiah very innocently told him, they were foreigners, come from a far Country, even from Babylon, the King had ſent them to congratulate him on his recovery, and he had juſt now ſhewn them his Treaſury, Palaces, and Fortifications, the Temple, his Armory and Stores, upon hearing which, the Prophet very gravely repreſented to him, his vanity, weakneſs and pride, ſtrikingly telling the King, thoſe very Babylonians, who had juſt glutted their eyes with the glory of his Palaces and Treaſury, would ſhortly ſtrip them of all their valuables, carry his Children captives to Babylon, and make his Sons Eunuchs in the Palace of their Prince. Hezekiah mildly anſwered,

" Good is the word of the Lord; is it not " good? If peace and truth be in my days."

I ſubmit, the ſentence is juſt and merciful, a puniſhment leſs than I deſerve, in that the evil is deferred, and does not immediately follow my ſin.

This Prince improved the City of Jeruſalem by elegant buildings, Store-houſes, Magazines, and a ſpacious Armory; and he added much to its ſtrength and ſecurity by many new Fortifications.

He

He planned a new aquæduct, in a very convenient part of the City, and it afforded a large ſupply of water to the inhabitants. He conſtantly kept in pay a number of ſkilful ſcribes, and always employed them in writing copies of the five Books of Moſes, and others of the ſacred Canon, and the King ſent, and diſperſed them every year, to all the Cities and Towns in his Kingdom.

According to the Prophets prediction, Hezekiah died in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and twenty-ninth of his Reign, and was buried in the chiefeſt of the Royal Sepulchres, with ſuperb ſplendour and magnificence, diſtinguiſhingly ſolemnized throughout the City and the whole Kingdom.

The Sepulchre was a large court of one hundred and twenty feet ſquare, forming a ſumptuous area, ſurrounded with a ſpacious cloyſter ſupported with pillars. Every part was cut out of a ſolid marble rock. The cloyſter led you on to a magnificent hall, with ſtone doors, twenty four feet ſquare. Many leſſer apartments ſurrounded the hall, on the ſides of which were nitches, in which the marble coffins of the King's were depoſited, the body of Hezekiah was placed in a nitch in the innermoſt of all, to confer the greateſt honour on this pious and very amiable Prince.

MANASSEH.

THIS young Prince was only twelve years old when his Father, good King Hezekiah died, at this early age, Manaſſeh aſcended the Throne of Judah, and was crowned in Jeruſalem, ſix hundred and ninety-ſeven years before the birth of our Saviour, and in the year of the World, three thouſand, three hundred and ſeven.

Brutiſh, and vicious from inclination, Manaſſeh was very unfortunate in his firſt counſellors and adviſers, he began his Reign in direct oppoſition to all the wiſe principles, plans, and cuſtoms of his pious Father, and he ſeemed purpoſely deſigning, and obſtinately determined to undo, all the good his Father had been doing.

Manaſſeh gave himſelf up, to the high indulgence of his paſſions and his pleaſures, he was impious,

impious, tyrannical and an Idolater; he introduced even into the ſervice of the Temple, the vileſt idolatries, he cauſed an Idol to be ſet up in the Holy of Holies, and to be there publickly worſhipped with heatheniſh abominations and ceremonies, and both the areas and grand entrance of the Temple he filled with Altars, erected to Baal and all the Stars and Hoſt of Heaven.

Manaſſeh, amongſt other execrable and heatheniſh ceremonies, cauſed his Son to paſs through the fire, and he obſerved days, lucky or unlucky ſeaſons, for diſpatch of buſineſs, and even practiſed witchcraft and inchantments.

The Prophets, diſtreſſed and alarmed, ſeverely reprimanded the King, expoſtulated and threatened him for his open violation of the laws, and ſacrilegious impiety, and with zeal and animation told him, God would bring down ſuch evils on Jeruſalem, the very horror of hearing them named would make his ears to tingle, in his vengeance God would turn his Kingdom upſide down as a diſh, empty it of its inhabitants, and cut it off from all hopes of reſtitution.

Such language, Manaſſeh held in deriſion, and this Idolatrous Prince treated the Prophets with the higheſt indignity and inſolence, he ſhed the

blood of many of them, and Iſaiah though allied to royalty, is ſaid at this time to have been ſawn aſunder and with a wooden Saw. The King practiſed the moſt wicked and cruel ſeverity on all who refuſed to fall down and worſhip the Idols and the Gods he had ſet up. Jeruſalem became the ſcene of the moſt horrid Butcheries, and the Metropolis ſtreamed with the blood of his Nobles, his Prophets, his Prieſts and his People.

At length, Providence was pleaſed to put a ſignal ſtop to his career, and the Jewiſh Prince was delivered into the hands of the Officers of Aſſaradin, King of Aſſyria, ſearching for him after a Battle and defeat, they ſpyed him in the midſt of a thicket of briars, where he had painfully and cunningly hid himſelf, the Officers ſeized the King's perſon, and conveyed him to the Camp. Manaſſeh loaded with heavy chains, was from thence led away captive to Babylon, and by order of the Aſſyrian Prince, ignominiouſly caſt into a Dungeon.

In this horrid and loneſome priſon, humbled and ſore abaſed, Manaſſeh's Eyes were firſt opened to all his miſcarriages and impiety; before the tribunal of Conſcience, his ſins and high aggravations, crimes almoſt forgot, were here paſſing in ſerious review, and Manaſſeh,

in

in the bitterneſs and anguiſh of his Soul, devoutly prayed to God, and he obtained mercy, pardon and deliverance.

From the greateſt ſinner, he became the greateſt penitent; from the bloodieſt Tyrant, one of the moſt merciful and beſt of Sovereigns. God ſo diſpoſed the heart of the King of Babylon, that on a treaty, Manaſſeh obtained his releaſe firſt from the Dungeon, and not long after from his bondage. As ſoon as he returned to Jeruſalem, he dilligently and zealouſly ſet about repairing all the damages his ſad impiety had occaſioned, and his very firſt care was to clear the ſanctuary and Temple of all the Idols, he had himſelf, moſt wickedly cauſed to be placed there, and he reſtored the daily Service of God, and His worſhip in the Temple, to its purity, its ancient uſages and ſplendour.

Manaſſeh, then wrote circular letters, and ſent them, throughout all his Kingdom, commanding all, and every one of his ſubjects, to deſtroy and utterly demoliſh every Idol, and the Altars and Groves, which he himſelf had, in the early part of his life, cauſed to be ſet up, and the People, with great readineſs, ſet about executing, throughout every Province, this new edict of their Prince.

Manaſſeh,

Manaſſeh, then turned his thoughts to his Metropolis, and he repaired and ſtrengthened its walls and fortifications, he reigned piouſly and in uninterrupted peace, three and thirty years after his return from Babylon, and died in the ſixty-ſeventh year of his age, and in the fifty-fifth year of his reign.

Manaſſeh, was buried in his Garden, at his own particular and very modeſt requeſt, the miſcarriages, and impiety of early life made him account himſelf unworthy of a place, in the royal ſepulchre, among his Anceſtors.

A M O N.

AT the age of twenty-two, Amon ſucceeded his Father Manaſſeh, and was proclaimed at Jeruſalem, in the year of the World, three thouſand, three hundred ſixty-two; and ſix hundred forty-two years before Chriſt.

This young Prince could only have witneſſed his Father's many virtues and piety, yet Amon inherited and lived in the daily practiſe of the moſt odious and worſt of all his vices and abominations. He was an Idolater and gave himſelf up to impiety, and the moſt criminal debaucheries, but before he had reigned two years, Amon was aſſaſſinated, in his own Palace, by ſome of his guard, and they buried him in the ſame garden with his Father. King Uzziah, had formerly planted, and laid out this garden, and it was on that account called Uzza. This unfortunate young Prince, had a Son only eight years of age, and they proclaimed him, King of Judah.

At the concluſion of ſo very ſhort a reign, it is aſtoniſhing to ſee the alteration which had taken place in Jeruſalem, and the very rapid progreſs of immorality and impiety. The Hiſtory informs us, that among the Princes and Nobles, the Judges and Magiſtrates, injuſtice, oppreſſion, cruelty and all manner of Debauchery reigned; among the Prieſts pride, avarice, corruption and a ſhameful traffick of Religion; among the people total ignorance and irreligion. Altars were reared every where to Baal, and to the whole Hoſt of Heavenly bodies, the Sanctuary throughout was polluted with Idols,

and

and in its ſacred Courts were practiſed the vileſt and moſt odious proſtitutions, abominable and Heatheniſh Ceremonies.

The following are Princes of one family and conclude the Reigns of the Kings of Judah.

JOSIAH.

THIS amiable and moſt virtuous Prince, was in the eighth year of his age, crowned in Jeruſalem, and proclaimed King of Judah.

In the year of the World, three thouſand, three hundred ſixty-four; and ſix hundred and forty years before the birth of our Saviour.

At the command of God, a Prophet foretold the birth of this young Prince, and even named him by name three hundred years before. "Be-" hold a child ſhall be born unto the houſe of " David, Joſiah by name."

Immediately after his coronation, Regents were elected from the Sanhedrim, the grand council of the Nation, with whom, together with his wife and pious tutors and counſellors, this young Prince, could only, from time to time, be directed and adviſed, truſting to their good management, and regulation of his Government. In the fifteenth year of his age, Joſiah married, and in the ſixteenth he had a Son and ſucceſſor born to him. He had now aſſumed the reigns of Government in his own hands. With aſſiduous zeal, and true piety, with an intrepidity almoſt beyond belief, he engaged in this virtuous and moſt arduous enterprize; his very wonderful expeditions, and ſignal ſucceſſes were aſtoniſhing.

Joſiah would not truſt to his officers and ſervants, he took an active part himſelf in deſtroying and pulling down throughout Judah and Iſrael, the Altars, Idols and Groves, which had been ſet up in both Kingdoms, and the King iſſued out a proclamation, forbidding all ſuch Worſhip, in any place, or grove, or Temple whatſoever

expreſsly naming in this edict every high place in particular, which laſt prohibition had been in vain attempted by his pious predeceſſors; in order more effectually to put a ſtop to this very obſtinate evil. Joſiah cauſed all ſuch places to be polluted with dead bodies, human carcaſſes and bones; every Prieſt who had offered Sacrifice and Worſhip there, he excluded from all Sacerdotal Functions and Priviledges whatever. The Idols, Altars, and all offerings dedicated to them, ſuch as Chariots, Veſſels, Horſes, and every article that could be burnt, he ſet on fire, and ſtrewed their aſhes over the graves of their Worſhippers, and all ſuch as could not be deſtroyed by fire, he cauſed to be flung into the River Kidron. From Jeruſalem Joſiah proceeded to the Mount of Olives, and demoliſhed all its Altars and Idols, from thence to the Valley of Hinnon, a place notorious for the horrid cruelties exerciſed by the Worſhippers of Moloch, after this he paſſed on to Bethel, where Jeroboam had ſet up the Golden Calves, Joſiah deſtroyed both Altars and Groves, and he cauſed to be dug up the dead bodies of the Idolatrous Prieſts, and burnt their bones to aſhes with their Altars, and their Gods, literally fulfilling the prediction of the Prophet three hundred years before he was born. Joſiah made his Circuit through all the other Cities of Iſrael, for as that

Kingdom

Kingdom was now in captivity, and lay almoſt wholly deſolate, he deſtroyed, and burnt every where, the Idols and Altars which he found, and when he had rooted out, from both Kingdoms, Idolatry and its abominations and ceremonies, he ſet about reſtoring the true worſhip of God in Jeruſalem, and beginning with the Temple, Joſiah renewed the daily Services, the Sacrifices, and the purity and ſolemnity of its worſhip.

This young Prince was now arrived at the age of twenty-ſix, and he had reigned eighteen years in Jeruſalem, at this time he ſet about the repairs and embelliſhments of the Temple, and while he was thus zealouſly and diligently employed, Hilkiah the High-Prieſt ſent the King word, he had that moment found the book of the Law, and Shaphan the Secretary of the Temple, was entruſted to carry it to the Palace, and lay it before the King; Joſiah immediately opened the Sacred Volume (ſuppoſed to be the book wrote by Moſes himſelf,) and when he there read, the dreadful judgments denounced therein, againſt thoſe very abominations and Idolatry, he had now himſelf been an eye witneſs to, throughout all Judæa, he humbled himſelf before God, he rent his cloaths and wept bitterly, pathetically expreſſing the grief and anguiſh of his ſoul, fearing leaſt both King, and People ſhould ſuffer, and

feel the dire effects of the threatenings and denunciations announced againſt the tranſgreſſor, which he ſaw recorded in that book.

Huldah, a Propheteſs, the Wife of Shallum lived at that time in the Colledge at Jeruſalem, Joſiah ſent to her, Hilkiah the High-Prieſt, a ſelect number of his Nobles and Shaphan his Secretary, and requeſted her to enquire of the Lord concerning the judgments denounced againſt Iſrael and Judah, of which he had been reading in the book; and Huldah anſwered them, God would not fail to inflict on the Inhabitants of Jeruſalem, all that ſore evil and even the curſes written in that book, but ſay ye to the King of Judah, becauſe thy heart is tender, and thou didſt humble thyſelf before God, and rend thy clothes and weep before me, I have heard thee, and witneſſed the anguiſh of thy ſoul, I will gather thee to thy Fathers in peace, and thy eyes ſhall not ſee the evil I will bring on Jeruſalem and its inhabitants; after this plain and direct anſwer to his inquiries, Joſiah aſſembled all the Elders, his Nobles, and Rulers of his People in the Temple, and he read himſelf before them, out of the book of the Law, and religiouſly exhorted them to the moſt rigid, pious, and careful obſervance of all its precepts and commands. The King aſſured them, they ſhould always be the rule of his conduct, he was himſelf

himſelf determined to obſerve them, and ſet his People a ſteady example of obedience.

The Prieſts and Levites were now all of them very buſy, preparing to celebrate the feaſt of the Paſs-over, and were killing the Paſchal Lamb. Joſiah exhorted them to purify themſelves for a work ſo very ſolemn and religious, he gave to the People, from his own flock, thirty thouſand Lambs and Kids and three thouſand Oxen. Since the days of Samuel, the Prophet, no ſuch religious Zeal and National Piety had ever been ſeen and witneſſed by the People.

After the celebration of the Paſs-over, Joſiah began another Circuit round his Kingdom, and expelled all the Wizards, Inchanters, Juglers and ſuch dark and magic practices from out the land. He eſtabliſhed in his Cities, Courts of Judicature, and Seminaries for inſtructing all the People in the law of Moſes, and he publickly, and very ſeriouſly exhorted the Prieſts and Levites, to employ all the day, in explaining and diligently enforcing, the pious obſervance on the People. Thus, with true religious zeal, King Joſiah exerted himſelf in the reformation of his Kingdom, in reſtoring the pure worſhip of God, and aboliſhing Idolatry, in hopes, by his own and his Peoples Piety, he might in ſome meaſure avert

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the ſad judgments threatened, from falling on his family and Jeruſalem.

This amiable, and beſt of Princes reigned one and thirty years in profound peace, and at that time, Pharoah Necho, King of Egypt, marched with his Army in order to invade Aſſyria. In hoſtile array, the King led them acroſs Judæa, intending only by that road to enter Aſſyria. Joſiah was diſpleaſed and alarmed, and the King with all his Army met the Egyptian Prince, intending a formidable oppoſition to his March, and Joſiah encamped in the Valley of Megiddo. Pharoah Necho here ſent a friendly Embaſſy to Joſiah, expreſsly aſſuring him, he had no hoſtile views whatever againſt the King of Judah. Joſiah had taken the alarm, and would not be perſuaded, as he was ſallying out from his tent in his chariot, and riding round his own Camp, Pharoah Necho's Archers ſhot at King Joſiah, and they wounded him, Joſiah ſaid, have me away, and his ſervants inſtantly took him out of the chariot bleeding and ſwooning, they put him into another chariot that he had in waiting, and hurried him from the Camp, but as ſoon as he had reached Jeruſalem, Joſiah died, in the thirty-ninth year of his age, and the thirty-firſt of his reign, and with this amiable and highly virtuous Prince is ſaid to have expired, the religion, the happineſs

happineſs and glory of the Nation. Jeremy the Prophet compoſed, on this ſad event, a pathetic, and at that time, a very celebrated Elegy, called the firſt Book of the Lamentations, a funeral Dirge, ſung by a choice band, of ſinging men and ſinging women, at his burial, with the deepeſt ſorrow and with the tendereſt feelings of diſtreſs, perſonal and national, the Prophet is ſaid to have deſcribed the mournful and heartfelt ſorrow of all his People. This book is unfortunately loſt, the ſecond Book of the Lamentations was wrote, on the ſure conviction, the Prophet then had, of the final deſtruction of Jeruſalem.

King Joſiah was magnificiently buried, in royal pomp in the of Sepulchre of David, and in ſuch affectionate veneration was the memory of this beſt of Princes held, that for more than a century afterwards (eſteeming this the firſt blow and commencement of their calamities) on all mournful occaſions, ſeaſons of ſorrow and diſmay, the ſinging men and ſinging women chanted this funeral Ode and afreſh commemorated, the very early, and untimely death, of King Joſiah.

JEHOAHAZ.

JEHOAHAZ.

THIS Prince was the youngeſt Son of King Joſiah, but being of an active warlike ſpirit, like a young Lion, the People made choice of him, blew the trumpets and proclaimed him King of Judah, in the year of the World, three thouſand three hundred and ninety-ſix, and ſix hundred and eight years before Chriſt.

Jehoahaz had alſo the name of Shallum, his Mother was a Daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. This young Prince aſcended the throne at the age of three and twenty, and unwiſely commenced his Reign with the very early proofs of diſſoluteneſs and impiety, ambitiouſly imitating the vices and idolatry of ſome of the worſt of his predeceſſors.

The People, in general, were much diſpoſed to return to their heatheniſh ſuperſtitions and the worſhip of Idols, and the King thought to gratify them by complacency and indulgence in order to acquire a popularity, and he hereby paid a compliment to Egypt, by conforming to their Idols and Ceremonious worſhip.

The Prophet Jeremiah was expreſsly ſent to Jehoahaz, and with earneſt warmth would fain have brought to his remembrance, the Virtues, and God-like Piety of his Father, perſuaſively inviting him to imitate it, and as a powerful inducement, at parting, the Prophet uttered a ſevere threat, and ſtrikingly told the King, that in caſe he did not, in right earneſt, ſet about a ſpeedy reformation, God would ſignally puniſh him, he ſhould be ignominiouſly led away captive, into a foreign land, and he ſhould die there.

The reign of Jehoahaz was very ſhort, only three months, for Pharoah-Necho, King of Egypt, having been ſucceſsful in his expedition againſt Aſſyria, as he returned back from the banks of the Euphrates, he paſſed through Judæa, and depoſed the Jewiſh King. Necho firſt diſpatched a Captain and his Guard, and ſummoned Jehoahaz to meet him at Riblah, where he ordered

him into confinement, and afterwards paſſed ſentence upon him.

Jehoahaz, laden with chains of braſs, diſgracefully followed Pharoah-Necho into Egypt, he there added to the honours of his triumph, and was confined a State-Priſoner as long as he lived, dying in a foreign land, as the Prophet had foretold.

The King of Egypt now made the Crown of Judah tributary, and laid on it a yearly tax of one hundred talents of ſilver and one talent of gold. Eliakim, the eldeſt Son of Joſiah, Pharoah-Necho placed upon the Jewiſh Throne, and to ſhow his Sovereignty as a Conqueror, he commanded him to change his name to Jehoiakim. The Egyptian Prince then led back his victorious Troops out of Judæa.

JEHOIAKIM.

JEHOIAKIM.

THIS Prince, the eldeſt Son of Joſiah, was crowned at Jeruſalem, in the year of the World, three thouſand, three hundred and ninety-ſix; and ſix hundred and eight years before the birth of our Saviour.

The King of Egypt, as an exerciſe of his royal Authority, had commanded him to aſſume the name of Jehoiakim, and he was now at the age of five and twenty.

In order to pay the tribute exacted by Pharoah-Necho, the young Prince began his reign by levying a heavy tax throughout his Kingdom, a mode which had been dictated to him by Egypt.

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Jehoiakim lived in the habitual practice of Idolatry himself, and the very worst vices of his Anceſtors, filling Jeruſalem with the innocent blood of the Prophets, and paſſing ſentence of death on all who refuſed to conform to Idol worſhip and his impiety.

On a day, when all the People were aſſembled in the Temple, to celebrate the feaſt of Tabernacles, a ſolemn Jewiſh Feſtival, the Prophet Jeremiah publickly admoniſhed and reproved both King and People, with warmth and earneſtneſs ſeriouſly exhorting them to repent, and he pronounced this ſevere threat, ſhould they perſiſt in their impiety and Idolatry, God would deſtroy their Temple, and Jeruſalem would become a curſe. At this freedom and zeal of the Prophet, the Populace, and more particularly the Prieſts were highly enraged, and they ſeized Jeremiah, and carried him before the Magiſtrates, but the Prophet was honourably diſmiſſed and acquitted, " This man is not worthy of death, he " hath ſpoken to us in the name of the Lord."

Nebuchadnezzar, King of Aſſyria, after he had glutted his revenge on the Egyptian Prince, and taken from him all that Country between the River Euphrates and the Nile, marched his victorious Army into Judæa and advanced to the Capital

Capital, he took the City of Jeruſalem and carried away Captive Jehoiakim, and the large and valuable gold veſſels, the richeſt ornaments of the Temple. The King remained long a State-Priſoner in Babylon, but at length the haughty Monarch condeſcended to accept a large yearly tribute, and reſtored the Crown and Kingdom to Jehoiakim.

The Hiſtory informs us, baniſhment and impriſonment, wrought no happy change in the diſpoſition of this very weak and moſt abandoned Prince, immediately on his return to Jeruſalem, he reſumed all his former vicious habits, his diſſoluteneſs and impiety, although they had been the ſad ſources, of all his former ſufferings and Captivity; Jeremiah the Prophet was again ſent to admoniſh him, and very ſtrikingly told him, that ſince he was deaf to reproof, and threatenings and warnings were of no avail, the King of Babylon would return with his Army againſt Judah, again beſiege Jeruſalem, and carry away both King and People, they ſhould be all led Captive to Babylon, and remain in bondage ſeventy years, after which they ſhould be no more a Monarchy, their lands ſhould be deſolate.

During three years, Jehoiakim continued regularly to pay his tribute, and acknowledge his

his ſubjection to Babylon, at that time he grew remiſs, and three whole years had paſſed, wherein he had paid none, upon which, a war commenced between the two Nations, and during theſe hoſtilities, Jeremiah was commanded to write down, on a roll of parchment, all his prophecies and threatenings concerning Judah, and to cauſe them to be read publickly, before all the People who were aſſembled on a high and ſolemn feſtival, then kept in the Temple; that the People ſeeing and hearing the many judgments denounced by God againſt them, might repent and be forgiven. The Prophet was at that time ſhut up in Priſon, but he directed Baruc, his Scribe, to write down from his mouth, the tenor and very words of the threatenings he had foretold, and audibly to read them before all the aſſembly; the ſcrole was firſt read in the High-Prieſt's apartment, then again in the Secretaries Office, in preſence of the Nobles and Princes; Baruc was commanded to withdraw until the King's pleaſure ſhould be known reſpecting the ſcrole. Jehoiakim ordered it to be brought to the Palace, and while they were reading, the King grew warm and angry at the denunciations and Judgments threatened him, he haſtily ſnatched the ſcrole out of his hand, cut it to pieces, and threw it into the fire.

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The Prophet was ordered again to write down the words of the ſame Judgments and threats, with this addition, that Jehoiakim ſhould have none to ſit upon the Throne of David, the dead body of Jehoiakim ſhould be caſt out, in the day-time be expoſed to the heat, in the night to the froſt, and that God would aſſuredly bring upon Judah all the evils denounced againſt them.

It was ſoon after the finiſhing of this ſecond ſcrole, Nebuchadnezzar having conquered Egypt, marched an Army of Syrians, Chaldæans, Ammonites and Moabites into Judæa, to inforce his authority and puniſh their revolt, under the banner of ſo puiſſant and victorious a Monarch, theſe Nations all in ſubjection and his tributaries readily enliſted, ravaging and laying waſte the whole Kingdom, and they led away captive a vaſt number of Jews, murdered their Prince and dragged his dead carcaſe ignominiouſly through the City and beyond its gates, and there left it unburied, according to the prediction of the Prophet Jeremiah.

Jehoiakim had reigned eleven years in Jeruſalem.

JEHOICHIN

JEHOIACHIN.

THIS young Prince, Son of Jehoiakim, is alſo called by the name of Jeconiah, he was eighteen years of age, when he aſcended the Throne of Judah, in the year of the World, three thouſand four hundred and ſeven; and five hundred and ninety-ſeven years before Chriſt.

At a very early period, Jehoiachin was diſtinguiſhed for his impiety, and he began his reign with the moſt abandoned vices of his Anceſtors, ſhort indeed was his trial and career, but wicked and baſe he practiſed, during that ſhort time, all the abominations of his Father.

At the end of three months, Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, marched a formidable Army into Judæa, and approached Jeruſalem. In the

moſt humble and ſubmiſſive manner, by the advice of the Prophet Jeremiah, the young Prince with his Wives and his Mother, his Nobles and the Officers of his Court, came out in a body, ſurrendered themſelves up, paid him homage as his vaſſals, and ſued for mercy. Nebuchadnezzar was inexorable, the Jewiſh King, his Wives, his Mother, his whole Court were made Priſoners, and afterwards led away Captives to Babylon.

The Temple, Palaces, Treaſury and City, were all plundered of every valuable, and Nebuchadnezzar carried off ſeven thouſand valiant Soldiers diſtinguiſhed for their bravery, and one thouſand craftſmen and ſmiths, among the Captives, Ezekiel the Prophet, and Mordecai Uncle to Queen Eſther, were now led away to bondage.

Before he left Jeruſalem, Nebuchadnezzar placed Mattaniah, Joſiah's third Son, and Uncle to Jehoiachin, on the Jewiſh Throne, upon his taking the oath of allegiance and fidelity, but he firſt ſelected out his hoſtages, and ſettled the yearly tribute to Babylon.

Mattaniah was commanded, to take upon him the name of Zedekiah. The Conquerors of the Eaſt impoſed a name, as a token of ſubjection,

on Princes they had honoured with their patronage.

The Seventy years Captivity of the Jews in Babylon, is dated from this period.

Jehoiachin, and his Mother, both of them died in Babylon, but the King had been ſeven and thirty years a State Priſoner; in the laſt year of his life, ſoon after Evil-Merodach came to the Crown, and ſucceeded Nebuchadnezzar his Father, this Prince ſent to the Priſon, and admitted the Jewiſh King to an apartment in the Palace, ordered the Enſign's of Royalty to be reſtored him, appointed him a table, and an allowance to all his family.

ZEDEKIAH.

AT the age of twenty-one, the youngeſt Son of King Joſiah, and Uncle to Jehoiachin, was crowned at Jeruſalem, King of Judah, and he aſſumed the name of Zedekiah.

In the year of the World, three thouſand four hundred and ſeven; and five hundred and ninety-ſeven years before the birth of our Saviour.

The reign of this young Prince, was not remarkable for its impiety, but it was ſignally diſtinguiſhed by many diſtreſſes almoſt too painful to relate, family, perſonal, and national.

Zedekiah, for ſome years, regularly paid his yearly tribute to Babylon. His neighbours the Ammonites, Moab, Edom, Tyre and Sidon

were at this time, all under ſubjection, and tributary to Nebuchadnezzar, the Aſſyrian Monarch, now at the height of all his glory. Each of theſe ſtates, and Kingdoms, had forwarded Ambaſſadors to Jeruſalem congratulating Zedekiah on his acceſſion and ſettlement on the Throne of Judah, but they every one of them, at the ſame time, ſecretly propoſed to him, a union with them, in a confederacy and revolt, all of them were eager and ambitious to ſhake off a dependance ſo burthenſome and diſgraceful.

Their propoſals were highly flattering and pleaſing to this young Prince, and he eargerly liſtened to them, but the Prophet Jeremiah, was well aware of their fallacy and danger, and he previouſly ſent to the ſeveral Ambaſſadors a chain and a yoke, deſiring them, to carry them home, each one to his own Court. The Prophet not contenting himſelf with ſo ſtriking an emblem and reproof, in the name of God, gravely and with earneſt warmth reaſoned with them, recommending a patient ſnbmiſſion, leaſt a much heavier yoke ſhould be lain upon them all.

Zedekiah, deceived by his Council and Nobles, liſtened to his flatterers, and he took encouragement from the predictions of his falſe Prophets, unwittingly expecting the bleſſings they foretold

foretold. Nothing was heard, but one perpetual cry of victory and deliverance from morning until night. The Prophet Jeremy, with zeal and great concern, ſtrenuouſly contradicted them. He expreſsly foretold the impending ruin of the City, and deſolation of the Country, and kept writing many letters himſelf to his friends and acquaintance already Captives in Babylon, whenever meſſengers were ſent thither with the yearly tribute money, deſiring they would not flatter themſelves with the expectation of liberty or deliverance before ſeventy years were expired. Theſe ſuffering Captives, diſtreſſed at what the Prophet told them, and in ſad deſpondency, wrote back angry letters to Jeruſalem, praying to have Jeremiah apprehended, and puniſhed, for uttering (as they ſuppoſed) the dictates of the King of Babylon, and not thoſe of the God of Iſrael. Jeremiah's enemies, and miſtaken friends at length prevailed, the Prophet was apprehended and caſt into Priſon. The falſe Prophets, whoſe favourable predictions had ſo flattered and infatuated Zedekiah, all exulted and rejoiced, at this event, and now acquiring more influence, they perſuaded the King to ſhake off the Babyloniſh yoke, but the enterprize and very raſh attempt haſtened on the deſtruction of the Temple, the City, and the Empire.

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As ſoon as Nebuchadnezzar heard of Zedekiah's revolt, and that he had broke his oath of Fidelity, he began building Forts at convenient diſtances, and garriſoned them, in order to prevent proviſion, and all ſupplies whatever being brought to Jeruſalem, and in the ninth year of the reign of Zedekiah, the Aſſyrian Monarch marched a formidable Army into Judæa and laid ſiege to the Capital, the King had neither time nor even the power of contriving and providing for his own ſafety or his Peoples, humbled and ſore alarmed, Zedekiah now ſaw his error, but it was too late; the King applied in right earneſt to the Prophet, and ſent for him out of priſon, Jeremiah expreſsly told him, both City and Temple would be utterly deſtroyed, the King himſelf, his Nobles and all his Subjects would be carried away Captive to Babylon.

At this time Pharoah-Hophra, King of Egypt, headed a powerful Army and brought them againſt the beſiegers, Nebuchadnezzar boldly led his Army back and met the Egyptians, a bloody battle was fought, and a complete victory obtained by Aſſyria. Nebuchadnezzar, with his highly ſpirited Troops, in the hour of triumph, returned before Jeruſalem and vigorouſly renewed the attack.

Zedekiah,

Zedekiah, had been earneſtly imploring the prayers and interceſſion of the Prophet, during the abſence of the Enemy, in behalf of himſelf and his People, but the only anſwer he could obtain was, the Chaldees would certainly return, Pharoah-Hophra, and the Egyptians, would all be driven back, Judah would be left to the mercy of the King of Babylon.

The City had held out two years and a half, at which time the People were almoſt ſtarved. By the battering rams and the vigorous efforts of the Chaldees, a breach in the wall was now made, and the Enemy kept pouring into the City in great numbers; while all this was taking place in one part, many of the ſoldiery and inhabitants fled, by way of a gate leading to the King's garden, and eſcaped to the plains. Jeremiah ſtrenuouſly urged the King to ſurrender himſelf, but he was all deſpair, and determined to attempt to fly away, and if poſſible elude the Enemy. For this purpoſe he ſtole out, at dead of night, with a few Nobles and only his Body-Guard; the Chaldæans ever on the watch, ſoon ſpied him out, and diſpatched a party which overtook him. Zedekiah, his Nobles and Guard, were all made Priſoners, and led to the Aſſyrian Camp, from thence they were carried to Riblah, and uſhered into the Royal Preſence. Nebuchadnezzar had

had here fixed his head-quarters, a convenient ſituation, from whence he could watch his own territories, and ſupply his Army with freſh recruits and proviſion.

The Aſſyrian Tyrant, ſavage and furious, here glutted his revenge moſt barbarouſly, he ſummoned a council, brought on the trial of Zedekiah, convicted him of treachery and rebellion, and inſtantly paſſed ſentence. Zedekiah's children were now, one by one, led into Court and butchered before his face, immediately after, the Father's eyes were both ſtruck out, indelibly to fix for ever on his mind, the laſt ſad ſight of all his life. This bloody, and moſt horrid deed, fell out in the eleventh year of his Reign, Zedekiah now blind and laden with heavy chains of braſs, was ignominiouſly led away to Babylon, to grace the triumph of the Babyloniſh Monarch, after which he ended his days there, a State-Priſoner, and in a dungeon. Thus Nebuchadnezzar found the means of reconciling the predictions of two Prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, both of them foretold Zedekiah's captivity and death in Babylon, this Prince was carried to Babylon and he died there, but he never ſaw the City, and Jeremiah had propheſied he never ſhould.

After

After a close siege, of more than two years, a numerous and powerful Army without, Famine and Pestilence within, the Chaldees took Jerusalem by storm on the twenty-seventh day of July, in the year of the World, three thousand four hundred and eighteen. They plundered the Temple and the royal Palaces, the Treasury, Publick buildings, and houses of the Nobles, seizing all the valuables, costly furniture, and the richest spoils. All the Gold, Silver, and Portables, with what were left of the utensils and magnificent Vessels (which they cut off from their stands) and now they pulled down the brass Pillars and sea of brass (so immense, they were said to be, without weight) and they stript them all off from the Temple and sent them to Babylon; the Chaldæan Army, practised the most wanton cruelty, ravaging and destroying all they could not carry away.

Some months after, Nebuzar-adon a Chaldee General, by orders from his Court, set fire to the whole City, and to this superb and most magnificent structure the Temple, after it had stood four hundred and fifty years, the Ornament and glory of the world. Having effected this total destruction of the City they demolished the Walls, Towers, Fortresses and Fortifications,

and the inhabitants as many as yet ſurvived, were all driven away captives to Babylon.

Foreſeeing this ſad event, in the ſpirit of Propheſy, Jeremiah pathetically foretold this mournful journey of the Iſraelites leading away to Babylon.

" A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation " and bitter weeping—Rachel weeping for her " children and refuſing to be comforted." Rachel, Jacobs beloved Wife, was buried between Ramah and Bethlehem, and the Iſraelites paſſed by her tomb, in their way from Jeruſalem to Babylon. The Prophet poetically calls her from the Manſions of the dead, (the afflicted Mother of both Tribes) to bewail the dire and ſad cataſtrophe—Sons, and Daughters, led away to bondage.

The advantageous ſituation of Jeruſalem, on a high eminence, the amazing ſtrength and height of its walls and bulwarks, the valour and martial proweſs of its warlike inhabitants had long protracted the ſiege. Nebuchadnezzar began with blocking it up with lines of circumvallation, and contravallation, to prevent all acceſs of proviſion and ſupplies, intending to ſtarve them and compel them to ſurrender, and he was hereby

avoiding

avoiding all ſallies from the beſieged, which might annoy his Army; but in high ſpirits, after his victory over Pharoah-Hophra, immediately on his return, he erected Towers, from the top of which, he could aſſault the Guards poſted on the walls. The beſieged, on their part, raiſed oppoſite edifices, by way of defence from the battering rams and other engines of the Enemy. Nebuchadnezzar vigorouſly employed every warlike art, and maneuvre, to open a breach for his brave ſoldiers, his horſes and chariots to enter, at laſt his efforts proved ſucceſsful, and he took by ſtorm, this almoſt impregnable Fortreſs and ſtrong Hold of Zion, this glorious and once ſo highly favoured Jeruſalem.

Thus moſt unhappily ended the Jewiſh Monarchy, after it had ſtood four hundred and eighty-eight years from the acceſſion of David, and three hundred and eighty-eight years from the revolt of the ten Tribes and ſubſequent diviſion of the Empire, and one hundred and thirty four years after the Iſraelitiſh common-wealth, conſiſting of the ten revolting Tribes, had ended in their diſperſion and captivity.

To this period the Kingdom of Judah had deſcended uninterruptedly in the line of David.

ESSAY XV.

COMMENCING THE REIGNS OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL.

JEROBOAM.

NADAB. } ZIMRI.
BAASHA. } OMRI.
ELAH. } AHAB.

JEROBOAM.

JEROBOAM.

IN the year of the World, three thouſand twenty-ſeven; and nine hundred ſeventy-ſeven years before the birth of our Saviour, Jeroboam Son of Nebat, an intrepid, and highly ſpirited Youth of the tribe of Ephraim, acquired a popularity, and was elected by the voice of the people, King over Iſrael.

At the appointment of Solomon, Jeroboam had been employed as Over-ſeer over his own Tribe, and over the tribe of Manaſſeh. Ahijah the Prophet had revealed to him, that on the death of the reigning Monarch, ten of the twelve Tribes would be rent from his Succeſſor, and that he himſelf was the perſon God had appointed to reign over them.

It

It was very uſual for the Prophets to exemplify their Meſſages by action, Ahijah the Skilonite met Jeroboam, as they two were croſſing a field alone, the young Officer was clad in a new garment, and Ahijah caught hold of the coat and rent it in twelve pieces, and he ſaid to Jeroboam, take ye ten pieces, for thus ſaith the Lord, the God of Iſrael, behold I will rend the Kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee.

On ſuch intelligence Jeroboam's ambition inſtantly took fire, he grew thoughtful and elated with his new expectations and dignity.

Whether Solomon ſuſpected his diſloyalty or had been informed of the Propheſy, Jeroboam thought it prudent to retire into Egypt to avoid all ſuſpicion, and the diſpleaſure and reſentment of the King, but immediately upon the death of Solomon, Jeroboam returned to be in readineſs, and watch the firſt favourable opportunity of gratifying an ambition, the Prophet Ahijah had ſo wonderfully excited.

The haughty vanity and thoughtleſs weakneſs of Rehoboam (Solomon's Son) gave him a very ſpeedy and ſucceſsful one.

A Faction

A Faction was ſuddenly formed and headed by Jeroboam, a petition from the People carried up by him for a redreſs of their grievances, was imprudently and with haughty inſolence rejected, a revolt inſtantly enſued — Rehoboam eſcaped for his life, flew away, mounted his chariot, and drove full ſpeed to his Capital for ſafety, Adoram, his officer of revenue, the venerable old Steward both of David and Solomon was murdered on the ſpot, and now ten of the twelve Tribes with ſpirit and intrepidity cried out aloud, " To your Tents! To your Tents! O' " Iſrael." Sounding inſtantly the trumpets they proclaimed Jeroboam King over Iſrael.

The firſt thoughts of this young Monarch were very naturallyand aſſiduouſly employed in arranging and eſtabliſhing his new-gotten Kingdom; the better to defend and ſecure it, he repaired to the boundaries and frontiers, fortified them, built barracks and ſtationed a guard; he next rebuilt and fortified Sechem and Penuel, making them royal Cities, the former he made his place of reſidence, where he ſettled his houſehold, and always kept his Court.

What perplexed Jeroboam, moſt of all was, that the Iſraelites of every Tribe, had made it a conſtant rule to go up publickly to worſhip God,

in

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in

in the Temple at Jeruſalem, three times every year. The King was fearful leſt at theſe ſeaſons ſeeing the ſplendour of the City, the Temple and the Prieſts, his ſubjects might avail themſelves of the opportunity, and reconcile their differences with their Brethren. Jeroboam impiouſly and ungratefully reſolved to ſacrifice religion, to his falſe ideas of ſafety, and he cauſed to be made two molten images in the figure of golden calves, ſuch as he had ſeen worſhipped in Egypt, and he ſaid, "Behold thy Gods O' "Iſrael." Jeroboam cauſed them to be ſet up, at the two extremities of his Kingdom, the the Northern and the Southern, the one at Dan, and the other at Bethel, and he iſſued out a proclamation commanding all his People to worſhip God at Dan and Bethel, and prohibited them, henceforward, under a ſevere penalty, even going up to worſhip at Jeruſalem.

From this fatal error aroſe all the misfortunes of this Prince's Reign, and Iſraels woe and diſtreſſes—God had graciouſly given him a Kingdom, and directed him to a line of virtue and duty, annexing a promiſe of protection and favour to the obſervance and performance of it—Jeroboam had witneſſed Idol worſhip in Egypt, and he choſe to prefer his own weak policy, and

fooliſh

fooliſh imaginations, to a grateful dependence on God, and a reliance on his promiſes.

To wean his People more effectually from their uſual mode and cuſtoms, Jeroboam ſet about building new Temples for Worſhip and Altars on all the high places; and he (in conformity to the feaſts in Judah) on the fifteenth day of the month, aſſembled all Iſrael proclaiming a high feſtival, a ceremonious and ſolemn dedication of theſe new Gods, their Temples, and their Altars.

A Prophet was expreſsly ſent on this occaſion, and he denounced a heavy Judgment on both Idols and Temples and their Altars, by a ſubſequent King of Judah, whom he now propheſied of by name, three hundred years before his birth; and the ſtronger to impreſs on their minds, his remonſtrance and highly awful prediction, and aſſure them of the truth of his prophecy, the Prophet performed a ſignal miracle before all the People who were now met for publick worſhip. The Prophet placed himſelf by the ſide of the Altar, and he bade the People liſten to a loud crack in the ſubſtance of it, and they would ſee the cinders run out at the rent; Jeroboam (in a Prieſtly habit pompouſly arrayed on this occaſion) ſtood near the Altar, intending himſelf to

offer up incenſe upon it—enraged at the freedom of the Prophet, and at the interruption to the ſervice, he ſtretched out his hand to have him apprehended—crying out—Lay hold on him! the King's hand and arm withered and dried up in an inſtant, ſo that he had no power to pull it back.

Jeroboam ſenſible of his impiety, aſtoniſhed and alarmed, he ſubmiſſively implored the aſſiſtance of the Prophet, " God hath manifeſted " himſelf to be thy God and friend, he will " hear thy prayers though He will not regard " mine," and the Prophet to convince Jero- " boam, he wiſhed his reformation, and not his " ruin, earneſtly prayed to God, and the hand " and arm were reſtored to him again.

The Altar was violently rent, the aſhes kept pouring out, and the Prophet ſaid, " O' Altar! Altar! a child of the houſe of David, Joſiah by name, behold he ſhall offer the Prieſts of the high places, even them that burn incenſe on thee, and mens bones ſhall be burnt upon thee. Jeroboam (though he could forget the author of his mercy, yet he would ambitiouſly have honoured the inſtrument) and he invited the Prophet home with him to dinner, and would fain have rewarded him for his cure, but the Prophet ſaid to the King, if thou wouldeſt give me half thy houſe,

yet

yet will I not go in with thee, neither will I drink water, or eat bread in this place, for ſo the Lord commanded me, and forbad me even to return by the ſame way that I came, and be again a witneſs of ſuch impiety and abominations.

This very extraordinary warning, ſo awfully impreſſed, wrought no change whatever on the conduct of Jeroboam, he practiſed the ſame breach of duty, continued his Idolatrous worſhip, iſſued out freſh orders commanding all Iſrael to repair to Dan and Bethel, and there worſhip God, whom he had idolatrouſly repreſented under the ſimilitude of a golden calf, and in each of theſe Cities had impiouſly ſet up.

Some time after this, the young Prince Jeroboam's eldeſt Son was ſick, his Father in deep diſtreſs, privately ſent his wife in diſguiſe to Ahijah the Prophet, who dwelt at Shiloh, behold, (ſays he) it was he, that told me, I ſhould be King over Iſrael, take with thee ten loaves, cracknels, and a cruſe of honey, (a ſuitable preſent for a perſon in low life) and he ſhall tell thee what ſhall become of my child. The Prophet was quite blind, and now grown very old, he was informed of her coming, and of her diſguiſe, immediately the Prophet knew the Queen, and he ſaid, as ſhe entered the door, come in thou

wife of Jeroboam, why feigneſt thou thyſelf to be another? I have heavy tidings to tell thee: Go tell Jeroboam thus ſaith the Lord, I exalted thee, and made thee Prince over Iſrael: I rent the Kingdom from the houſe of David, and gave it to thee: But thou haſt done evil, made thee other Gods even molten images, and caſt me behind thy back: Behold I will bring evil on the houſe of Jeroboam, him that dieth of Jeroboam in the City, ſhall the dogs eat, and him that dieth in the field, ſhall the fowls of the air eat, all ſhall lie unburied, and his poſterity be utterly caſt off. The Queen went ſorrowfully home, and when ſhe came to the threſhhold of the Palace, Abijam the young Prince her Son died, and orders for a general mourning were inſtantly iſſued out.

The Hiſtory informs us, that neither the death of this amiable youth (ſo kindly taken from amidſt the calamities of his Country) nor the awful meſſage ſent by the Prophet foretelling the ſad deſtruction of himſelf, and his whole Family, had any effect in reclaiming this idolatrous, very obſtinate, and moſt abandoned Prince.

Rehoboam, King of Judah, was now dead, and Abijam his Son, had aſcended the throne of his Father. He was a ſpirited young Prince, fond

fond of glory and martial honours, at the head of a powerful Army he marched to Mount Zemoraim, and encamped on the borders of Ephraim; Jeroboam advanced with a much more numerous Army, and he here met his rival. The youthful monarch, in an animated ſpeech accoſted the Troops of Jeroboam, and upbraided them for a ſeparation and revolt ſo unnatural and unbrotherly. Jeroboam an experienced officer, availed himſelf of the moment, and of what the young Prince was about, he filed off one body of men after another, placing them all round the hill, and commanded them to fall fiercely on Abijam's Army in the rear, and he himſelf would at the ſame time attack him in front. Notwithſtanding this highly artful and ſpirited piece of Generalſhip, Abijam ordered the trumpets to ſound, a general ſhout throughout all the Army and they gallantly fought their way through all the Troops of Iſrael, and ſo immenſe was the ſlaughter, they put to the ſword five hundred thouſand Iſraelites. Abijam purſued his victory, took the City of Bethel, and ſo haraſſed and weakened Jeroboam, he never had afterwards courage, or power to oppoſe Abijam.

Jeroboam did not very long ſurvive his diſgrace, after a reign of two and twenty years he died and was ſucceeded by his Son.

NADAB.

N A D A B.

THIS young Prince Son of Jeroboam was proclaimed King of Iſrael, in the year of the World, three thouſand and forty-nine; and nine hundred and fifty-ſix years before Chriſt, and in the ſecond year of the reign of Aſa King of Judah.

Nadab was an Jdolatrous Prince and inherited all the vices of his Father. His reign was only between one and two years, Nadab was then murdered at the ſiege of Gibbethon (a fortreſs belonging to the Philiſtines) by Baaſha of the tribe of Iſſachar.

Baaſha ſeized upon the Crown and Kingdom, and the very firſt Act of his authority was, to put to death all the race and kindred of Jeroboam, and thus the Prediction of the Prophet Ahijah was literally fulfilled.

BAASHA.

THIS Prince uſurped the Crown of Iſrael in the year of the World, three thouſand and fifty, and nine hundred and fifty-four years before Chriſt; and in the third year of Aſa King of Judah.

Baaſha was the Son of Ahijah of the tribe of Iſſachar. An Idolatrous, and wicked Prince and he maintained an almoſt uninterrupted war with the Kingdom of Judah.

Baaſha witneſſed with an envious eye, Aſa's high proſperity and honours, and in order to watch him and ſeize every advantage over Judah, Baaſha took Ramah and very buſily employed himſelf in building Towers and Fortifications. Aſa was at that time ſick, and in his firſt alarm, he

ſent an Embaſſy and very valuable gifts, even all the gold and ſilver in his Treaſury, to Benhadad, King of Syria. There was a league, a national alliance then ſubſiſting between the Kingdoms of Syria and Iſrael, but Benhadad accepted notwithſtandingoft he King of Judah's preſent, and forwarded an Army from Damaſcus, to the northern part of the Kingdom of Iſrael and ſeized upon the Town of Ijon, and two Cities in Naphthali, and ſome others which lay neareſt to his Capital, and were moſt remote from Ramah, where Baaſha was erecting his fortifications. Baaſha was therefore under the neceſſity of leaving off, in order to come and defend his own Kingdom, and drive out the Syrians.

In the latter end of the reign of Baaſha, Jehu, a Son of the Prophet Hanani, was ſent to him, and God commanded him to tell Baaſha, that as he had choſe to imitate the vices and impiety of his predeceſſors, he ſhould alſo partake of their puniſhment. "For as much as I exalted thee "out of the duſt, and made thee Prince over my "People, and thou chuſeſt to walk in the way "of Jeroboam; behold I will take away the poſ-"terity of Baaſha, him that dieth of Baaſha in "the City, dogs ſhall eat, and him that dieth of "his in the fields, the fowls of the air." Thus ingloriouſly ſhould Baaſha and all his Family be

cut

cut off from Iſrael. It was ſoon after this viſit of Jehu, and the delivery of his very awful meſſage, that Baaſha died, but he had reigned over Iſrael four and twenty years.

Baaſha was ſucceeded in his Kingdom, by his Son Elah.

E L A H.

THIS young Prince aſcended the Throne of Iſrael in the year of the World, three thouſand and ſeventy-two; and nine hundred and thirty two years before the birth of our Saviour, in the twenty-ſixth year of the reign of Aſa King of Judah.

Elah a debauched and idolatrous youth, very ſoon experienced the ſad prediction of Jehu, the

Son of Hanani, verified; for he was only in the ſecond year of his reign, when Zimri one of his own Generals, who commanded over his Chariots during the ſiege at Gibbethon, a fortreſs of the Philiſtines, aſſaſſinated Elah, as he was ſitting in the tent of the high ſteward of his houſehold, feaſting and carouſing with his Nobles at a time that his Army were all in martial exerciſe and reviewing in the field.

Zimri ſeized the Crown of Iſrael, and he put to death all the whole family of Baaſha, even his moſt diſtant Relations, and all his Confidents and familiar acquaintance, every one he thought likely to oppoſe his ſettlement on the throne, or avenge the quarrel or the death of their friends.

ZIMRI.

THIS Prince was proclaimed in Sechem King of Iſrael in the year of the World, three thouſand ſeventy-three; and nine hundred and thirty-one years before Chriſt.

The Reign of Zimri laſted only ſeven days, at which time Omri another general Officer had influence enough to get himſelf elected to the Government.

3073.

OMRI.

OMRI a general Officer was now proclaimed and the better to ſecure and eſtabliſh himſelf in his Kingdom, he inſtantly gave orders for raiſing the ſiege of Gibbethon, and marched at the head of his Troops againſt Zimri, who had ſhut himſelf up in the Palace at Tirzah, but before Omri or any of his men could procure entrance at the City Gates, Zimri in his royal Palace ſet fire to the whole building, and he burnt himſelf, and the Treaſury and every thing in it to the ground. Thus reſolute and paſſionate, full of anguiſh and deſpair, Zimri finiſhed his very ſhort reign of ſeven days and his life.

A Civil War diſtracted the Kingdom ſeveral years after Omri had aſſumed the Government, and the People attempted to place Tibni the Son of Ginath on the throne of Iſrael, Omri's party at length prevailed, and his Competitor was taken off.

This

This Prince was impious, and moſt abandoned he is ſaid to have outdone all his predeceſſors, in wickedneſs and idolatry.

By Zimri's mad and horrid ſuicide, to prevent falling into the hands of his adverſary, the Palace of Tirzah was totally burnt to the ground, Omri purchaſed of Shemer a hill called Samaria, for two talents of ſilver (ſeven hundred pounds) and he employed himſelf very buſily during the firſt ſix years of his reign, in building a City upon it—Ever afterwards Omri made it the Capital of his Kingdom. All we read more of this Prince is, that he reigned ſix years after in Samaria with all the impiety, the heatheniſh ceremonies, and abominations of his predeceſſors. At the end of a reign of twelve years, Omri died, and was ſucceeded by Ahab his Son. It was propheſied of Iſrael, ſhe ſhould be as a reed ſhaken in the water, and it is obſervable that no leſs than ſeven Kings reigned in Iſrael during the ſingle reign of Aſa King o Judah.

AHAB.

AHAB.

NINE hundred and twenty years before the birth of Chriſt; and in the year of the World, three thouſand and eighty-four, Ahab, Son of Omri, was crowned in Samaria King of Iſrael. In the thirty-eighth year of the Reign of Aſa King of Judah.

This very impious, and moſt Idolatrous Prince, was almoſt all his reign haraſſed by war, and his Kingdom ſorely diſtreſſed by a long continued, and very ſevere famine; the fatal conſequences and ſad reward of his impiety.

After Ahab is repreſented by his Hiſtorian, as obſtinately perſiſting in all the abominations of Jeroboam, he pertinently aſks this queſtion, was idolatry and baſeneſs like his a light thing that therefore he needed to add to his impiety more

abominations ſtill? But Ahab moſt perverſely did, for contrary to the expreſs commands of God, he took to Wife Jezebel a heathen Princeſs Daughter of Ethbaal, King of Sidon, a woman moſt infamous for her idolatry, cruelty and ſorcery. The union proved an uninterrupted ſource of diſtraction and bloodſhed. The Queen introduced the worſhip of the Gods of Sidon among the Iſraelites, and ſhe ſet up their Idols in Samaria, even human ſacrifices were offered up and witchcraft and the moſt abominable ceremonies publickly practiſed. Of all Iſrael only ſeven thouſand remained who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Againſt God's eſpecial prohibition, in open defiance of his laws, Ahab built a Temple to Baal, and reared up an Altar for ſacrifice, and he made a grove and placed idols therein, even devils for his Peoples worſhip.

In cold blood Ahab and his murderous Queen butchered both Prophets and People, whoſoever dared oppoſe the worſhip, and refuſed to bow down before the Gods of Sidon.

The land being mountainous, and long ſuffering for want of the former and the latter rain, to prepare the earth for tillage, and bring the fruits to maturity, it at length became quite barren, and a waſting famine enſued and had already

already laſted three years, when the Prophet Elijah was ſent and ſhewed himſelf to Obadiah, the Governor of the King's houſehold. Obadiah was diligently employed himſelf, in ſearching every where for freſh ſprings to water the little cattle which yet remained alive, and Ahab having no one he could truſt, was walking out another way, on the ſelf-ſame errand, they were thus as it were dividing the land between them, peradventure (ſays the King) we may find enough for the horſes and mules, that we looſe not all the beaſts. Obadiah was a pious good man, and at the hazard of his life, had hid in caves no leſs than a hundred young Prophets, concealing them from the furious bigotry of the Queen, and he fed them with bread and water every day himſelf during the whole time of the famine. Upon ſeeing the Prophet Elijah, in order to ſhew his great reſpect and love to him, Obadiah fell on his face, and reſpectfully aſked him, art thou not my Lord Elijah? and the Prophet anſwered, I am, go tell thy Lord, Elijah is here. Obadiah modeſtly heſitated, fearing leſt the Prophet ſhould be inſulted and rudely treated by his haughty maſter, Elijah was reſolute, as the Lord of Hoſts liveth, I will ſurely ſhew myſelf to him to day, under his protection I durſt, and will venture to come into the preſence of Ahab. After telling him of the King's angry inquiries, Obadiah

went

went out to ſeek Ahab, and when Ahab ſaw Elijah, he inſolently aſked, art thou he that troubleth Iſrael? and the Prophet anſwered, (acting in the name of God) thou and thy houſe art the cauſe, in that ye have forſaken the commandments of God and followed Baalim.

To convince the King, and with a view to reclaim him, Elijah propoſed a fair method, and now follows the awful highly inſtructive trial of ſkill between the Prophet and the Prieſts of Baal, and all Iſrael were aſſembled as Judges upon Mount Carmel.

Elijah addreſſes the People in a wiſe and zealous ſpeech, how long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him, but if Baal then follow him, a dead ſilence enſued, the People knew the drought and famine was a judgment from God, and that Baal could not remove it, though ſtaggering in their opinion about Baal they dared not diſown him in the preſence of their Sovereign.

Elijah commanded the Prieſts of Baal, to choſe one bullock for themſelves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under it; they were then to call on their Gods. After which he would ſlay another bullock, and lay it on an Altar, and put no fire under it, and the God that anſwered by fire, He was the true God To this mode of trial the People all agreed.

Elijah directed the Prieſts of Baal to ſlay their ox firſt, and place it over the wood upon the grand Altar. The Prophets of Baal and his Prieſts moſt earneſtly prayed and implored, they bowed and knelt and vowed, exerting all in vain, every art, enchantment and divination, no ſacred fire blazed around their ſacrifice, all fervent zeal from morning until noon, and then they cut and ſlaſhed themſelves with knives and lances (their bloody mode of worſhip) Elijah, placid and at eaſe, with the wittieſt pleaſantry attempts to rectify their notions and falſe ideas of a God, Baal illuſtrious in their eyes, a great perſonage of uncontroulable power, the Prophet by contraſting his limited ſphere, with the exalted ideas of Omniſcience and Omnipotence, repreſents Baal an image impotent and ridiculous; he is ſurely a great God, and will not hear, he is buſy, perhaps talking, or purſuing, on a journey, or aſleep. Elijah's own proceſs and trial is next related, his Altar raiſed, the ox laid acroſs it, and the wood underneath, a fire from Heaven alighted inſtantly on the Altar blazing and conſuming the ſacrifice.

All Iſrael fell proſtrate on the ground, reverentially worſhipping the ONE only living and true God.

Of

Of ſuch devout homage Elijah inſtantly availed himſelf, and he commanded them to put to death all the Idolatrous Prieſts of Baal, (no leſs than four hundred and fifty) and the People inſpired by the Prophet, drove them to the Brook Kiſhon and they were all drowned or ſlain.

Ahab was ſorely mortified, but he ſtood by, and ſilently permitted it.

After this Elijah walked up compoſedly to the King, go home (ſays he) to dinner, God will ſhortly ſend you rain, ſeeing afterwards Ahab's delay, he ſent him by his ſervant a hurrying meſſage, haſte—haſte home—you will be wet! the King had only time to mount his chariot and enter his Palace before a ſudden tempeſt poured down rapidly, Elijah reſpectfully ran before the chariot, and entered the City Jezreel, but to avoid the angry Queen, he would not go near the Palace, Elijah left Samaria, and fled away for his life.

The King related all that had happened at Carmel, told the Queen of his diſgrace, and of his ſufferings, and (ſays he) the ſhame was open and publick, even before all my People. Furious and Frantic on hearing of the death of all her domeſtic Chaplains and her Prieſts, inſpired with no reſpect for the Prophet's perſon, or his venerable character, nor for the ſignal ſervices he had juſt done the Country, nor for his God, the

Queen vowed ſhe would murder Elijah, and before to-morrow's dawn.

Ahab had thus attempted his own vindication, giving her all the ſatisfaction in his power, although the event had ſo paſſionately inflamed this very Furious and angry Queen. Thus ended the long continued drought and ſore famine in Samaria.

This Prince had reigned eighteen years over Iſrael when Benhadad, King of Syria, entered Samaria with a formidable Army, and laid cloſe ſiege to his Capital; two and thirty crowned Heads with amazing Forces, Horſe-men and chariots enliſted in this expedition under the Syrian banner againſt Iſrael. Benhadad, glorying in his ſtrength, ſent an inſulting Embaſſy to Ahab, " Thy Silver and " thy gold is mine, thy wives, the goodlieſt are " mine, and thy children." On theſe terms, acceptest thou peace?

Ahab terrified almoſt to deſpair, anſwered him, my Lord O King! I am thine, even all that I have, thy vaſſals and tributary, myſelf, wives, children and eſtates, I hold them by thy favour, and with ſuitable acknowledgments. Benhadad retracted his offers, and with this haughty threat ſent back his meſſengers, to-morrow my ſervants ſhall ſearch thy houſe, and the houſes of thy Nobles, I expect not only thy treaſures, I will have theirs alſo, my ſervants ſhall have liberty to

bring

bring away all they desire, on these conditions grant I thee peace.

These last demands obliged Ahab to call a council of all his Nobles and Elders, surely, (says the King) Syria is determined to destroy us, the unanimous advice of his Council was by no means to comply, hearken not to him, nor consent. Ahab sent word back, tell my Lord the King, to his first offers I agree, but to his last proposals my People will not suffer my assent. Benhadad replied, with so powerful and numerous an Army will I make my assault, every soldier shall not have a handful of Samaria to carry off.

Ahab had a little time to recover his dignity and composure, he told Benhadad, " Let not him, who girdeth on his harness, boast as him, that putteth it off, do not triumph before victory, events of war are uncertain." Benhadad was carousing with his Royal Allies in his State Pavillion, and hearing the message, he commanded his officers instantly to prepare and make the assault.

It was just at this time a Prophet was sent to Ahab with the highly welcome tidings, thus saith the Lord, hast thou seen this multitude? behold I will this day deliver it into thy hands. Ahab encouraged, grew inquisitive, asked how

he

he ſhould proceed, and he was anſwered by the Prophet. The King purſued the directions given him, he and his young men and his Army ſallied out at mid-day, while Benhadad was drinking himſelf drunk in his Pavillion, he and his two and thirty Kings, Benhadad cried out—fight—fight—whether they come out for peace or war take them alive; but Ahab, and the young men, and about ſeven thouſand which followed ſlew every one his man, the Syrians all fled, and Iſrael purſued, Benhadad himſelf mounted a horſe, and fled away full ſpeed with the Horſemen.

Thus Ahab fought againſt Syria, immenſely great and bloody was the ſlaughter.

The Prophet paid another viſit to the Palace, and deſired Ahab to conſider what was fit and proper to be done by way of defence and ſecurity, next year about the ſame ſeaſon the Syrian Army would return and invade Samaria.

Benhadad as the Prophet had foretold numbered his men of war, and marched them up to Aphek, a City in the tribe of Aſher.

All Iſrael here gathered together to oppoſe them, ſorely unwilling to be again blocked up in Samaria. Ahab formed his little Army into two diviſions,

diviſions, and they ſeemed like two little flocks of kids, but the Syrians filled all the Plain. Ahab was here again inſpirited by the Prophet, and he aſſured him, all the huge multitude, he ſaw, would be delivered into his hands; the Armies of Iſrael and Syria, faced one another, day after day, for ſeven days, on the ſeventh the battle was furiouſly fought, and one hundred thouſand Syrians ſlain on the ſpot, the reſt were put to flight, and they ran to the City of Aphek, where the walls fell down and cruſhed no leſs than ſeven and twenty thouſand that were left. Benhadad ſought a refuge for himſelf in Aphek, and hid himſelf in an inner-chamber; a few of his Nobles here held a conference with the King, we have heard (ſay they) the Kings of Iſrael are merciful Kings, as a teſtimony of our ſorrow let us put ſack-cloth on our loins, and ropes on our necks, having forfeited our lives, let us ſue for mercy, ſo they clad themſelves in ſack-cloth, and with ropes round their necks ſubmiſſively came to the Iſraelitiſh Camp, and requeſted an audience of Ahab.

" Thy ſervant Benhadad, I pray thee let me live."

Ahab with magnanimity and courteſy, graciouſly cried out, is he yet alive? he is my Brother, not only do I pardon him, but I honour and reſpect him as a Brother, and he cauſed

Benhadad

Benhadad to come up to him in his chariot, and they drove off to the royal Pavillion, and there the two Kings entered into a covenant, a friendly Alliance with each other, and Benhadad ſaid, " the Cities my Father took from thy Father, all " of them I will reſtore, thou ſhalt build a Citadel " and place a guard in Damaſcus, and traffick in " my ſtreets, and I agree to pay a yearly tribute to " Iſrael." The treaty was ratified, after which without any ranſom whatever, Ahab diſmiſſed the Syrian King and ſent him home.

It was on this occaſion, a young Prophet with his face beſmeared with blood and mire, deſired he might be brought into the King's preſence, and he fell down and paid him homage, a Syrian Priſoner (he ſaid) had been committed to his cuſtody, with a ſtrict charge from his Officer not to let him eſcape on pain of death; by his neglect, the Priſoner had eſcaped, he had fled, behold thy ſervant every moment in danger of being puniſhed, Ahab pronounced him guilty of death, the young man wiped his face, threw off his diſguiſe, with manly courage told Ahab, he had pronounced judgment on himſelf, God had delivered into his hand, a powerful enemy of Iſraels, behold He is gone free, and your life ſhall pay for the life of the Priſoner.

Ahab now ſaw he was a young Prophet, and he was wonderfully ſtruck with the intre-

pidity

dity of the youth and the ſtratagem, but he did not break the promiſe he had given Benhadad.

Ahab ſet off for his Capital, very thoughtful on this ſignal event, and with much apparent grief and indignation.

The King had two Palaces, the one at the City of Samaria, the other at Jezreel.

A wealthy neighbour, named Naboth, had a Vine-yard at Jezreel, adjoining to the gardens of the Palace. Ahab made him an offer to buy it, or he would exchange it with him for one of greater value elſewhere, it was a very convenient ſpot for a kitchen garden, and lay very advantageouſly, a right aſpect, and contiguous to his own. God had expreſsly allotted the diviſion of the lands, and he had forbid the alienation of them to other tribes and families, Naboth was conſcientious, and he thought it diſgraceful to part with it, a family eſtate he wiſhed to deſcend to his children, and ('tho' uncourteous) he took courage and refuſed the requeſt of his Prince. The King was ſorely vexed and diſappointed, he would neither eat nor drink, nor dreſs, nor waſh himſelf, ſullen and worried he turned away from his company and lay all day long with his face againſt the wall.

Jezebel his wife, found him out, and enquired the cauſe, why ſo ſad? and why do you faſt?

Ahab told the Queen of the refuſal of Naboth, Jezebel replied, art thou a King over Iſrael? canſt pluck up no courage to uſe your power, and revenge your affronts, go eat bread and let thy heart be merry, I will give thee the Vine-yard of Naboth. Her Majeſty immediately ſet down, and wrote letters to the Elders of Jezreel, and ſealed them with the royal ſignet, commanding a faſt to be proclaimed, a publick meeting of all the Magiſtrates and Gentry, and the uppermoſt ſeat ſhe directed to be given to Naboth.

Naboth's Preſence and Perſon thus made ſure of, they were commanded to ſuborn falſe witneſſes and impeach him of high treaſon and blaſphemy, and then carry him out to a high place where malefactors were executed, and ſtone him to death.

The Jezreelites dared not diſobey the Queen, they ſoon diſpatched a Meſſenger to the Palace, "Naboth is ſtoned, and is dead" and to give Ahab an undiſturbed Poſſeſſion, his Sons are ſaid to have been ſtoned with him: Her Majeſty herſelf carried the news to Ahab, the King inſtantly aroſe, waſhed himſelf, eat and drank, and then repaired to the Vine-yard, in order to take Poſſeſſion —On the Spot, Elijah the Prophet met Ahab, the King was awed and highly ſtruck, and he cried out, haſt thou found me O mine Enemy? and Elijah anſwered him, I

have

have, becauſe thou haſt wilfully become the bond-ſlave of the Devil, doing what thy Wife perſuades thee. Though thy guilt is ſo cunningly concealed from men, it lies open and naked to the Eye of God—the Prophet then expreſly told him, the ſad deſtruction the murder of Naboth would bring upon himſelf—his Queen—and on all his family; dogs ſhould lick the blood of Ahab, and on the ſelf-ſame ſpot, where they had licked the blood of Naboth, Jezebel his Queen ſhould be devoured with dogs, the poſterity of Ahab ſhould utterly be cut off.

This moſt horrid denunciation, and from the mouth of the Prophet, ſtruck Ahab with the utmoſt horror and diſtraction, Ahab rent his clothes, returned ſorrowing home, he went bare-foot, put ſack-cloth on his fleſh, faſted, and lay in ſack-cloth, Ahab by penitence, contrition, and timely repentance obtained a gracious reſpite, and a delay of the judgments, and ſad calamities during his life, but they all literally took place after his death.

The Kings of Iſrael and Syria were both ſo weakened, and their treaſuries exhauſted by the late wars, they needed peace and time to recruit and repair their loſſes, and the Hiſtory informs us, "three years paſſed without war, between Syria and Iſrael; at that time Jehoſophat King of

Judah paid a visit at the Court of Samaria. Ahab had just then held a council of his Nobles and Elders, and made a speech, in which he informed them, Syria had retained Ramoth, a City in Gilead, and one which had been appointed a City of refuge, contrary to the covenant Benhadad had made with him after the last conflict; and Ahab said to Jehosophat (his guest) wilt thou go up with me to Ramoth, and assist me in gaining my right? Jehosophat having formed a firm alliance with Israel, and lately married his Son Joram to Athaliah a Daughter of Ahab's, said to the King, "I am as thou art, my People "and my horses thine," myself, and forces, as much at your service as my own, but let us enquire said the King, the mind of God in it, what success we may expect; upon which Ahab gathered together the Prophets, about four hundred Priests and false Prophets, and Ahab desired him to hear and witness himself how very favourable all their predictions respecting it were.

At the high Gate, in the grand Court of Judicature, two Thrones were erected for the Kings of Judah and Israel, and there, in their royal Robes and all the ensigns of Majesty, they both sat enthroned; one after another no less than four hundred Priests and false Prophets were all brought before them — eagerly and with wondrous

wondrous Zeal, (as they had been directed) in the name of Jehovah and not of Baal, the more to deceive Jehoſophat into a good opinion of the War, they all promiſed Victory—their earneſtneſs and poſſitivity occaſioned ſome ſuſpicion, and Jehoſophat enquired after Micaiah the Son of Imlah, another Prophet and one whom he knew ſomething of, when Micaiah came, by way of deriſion, and in the words of the falſe Prophets, go ſays he and proſper, the Lord ſhall deliver up Ramoth—Jehoſophat ſolemnly adjured him in the Name of God—tell me the truth, upon which the Prophet ſeriouſly told him, Ahab would loſe both the day and his life, the King would meet death, where he was looking for victory. Ahab was ſorely diſpleaſed, and he ſaid to Jehoſophat, I told you he would propheſy evil, malicious and treaſonable is his propheſy (ſays Ahab) and the King craftily tried to leſſen its influence; upon which Micaiah ſpoke again, in a viſion I ſaw all Iſrael ſcattered upon the Mountains of Gilead, as ſheep without a ſhepherd. Upon hearing this, Zedekiah, a ring-leader among the falſe Prophets, and much in favour with Ahab, ran up to Micaiah, and ſmote him on the cheek, ironically aſking, which way went the ſpirit of the Lord from me to thee? Micaiah replied, when thou ſhalt go from cham-

ber

ber to chamber to hide thyſelf, on that day ſhalt thou know. Ahab put a ſtop to the controverſy. Put this fellow in Priſon, feed him with the bread and drench him with the water of affliction, until I return in peace, Micaiah ſaid, if O' King thou return at all, the Lord hath not ſpoken by me. Zedekiah (imitating the true Prophets and propheſying by action) placed iron horns upon his head, and he ran about (crying) with theſe ſhalt thou puſh the Syrians, until they be deſtroyed.

Notwithſtanding this information from the Prophet Micaiah, King Jehoſophat accompanied Ahab to the ſiege of Ramoth Gilead.

A bloody battle was fought before the town—Ahab had changed his dreſs and fought in diſguiſe but he perſuaded Jehoſophat to keep on his robes and enſigns of royalty, thus conſpicuouſly diſtinguiſhed, he was ſoon in the heat of the battle and in the extremeſt danger; in this critical moment, by a random ſhot, Ahab was mortally wounded, ſtill furiouſly the battle raged, bleeding and dying, his ſervants held up Ahab in his chariot, to animate his ſoldiers for Glory and Victory. Ahab lived only until ſun-ſet, when a proclamation was iſſued throughout the Hoſt. "Every man to his City—Every man to his own Country."

The Iſraelites conveyed the King's corpſe to Samaria, and buried him in the royal Sepulchre.

His

His chariot ſwimming with blood, together with his armour were waſhed in a Pool adjacent to the Palace, and the dogs came and licked his blood.

ESSAY XVI.

CONCLUSION OF THE REIGNS OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL.

AHAZIAH.	ZECHARIAH.
JEHORAM.	SHALLUM.
JEHU.	MANAHEM.
JEHOAHAZ.	PECHALIAH.
JEHOASH.	PEKAH.
JEROBOAM II.	HOSHEA.

AHAZIAH,

AHAZIAH.

IN an idolatrous Court, this young Prince acquired all its evil habits, vices, and abominations; Ahaziah ſucceeded his Father Ahab in the year of the World, three thouſand one hundred and ſix; and eight hundred and ninety-eight years before the birth of Chriſt.

Very little is recorded of Ahaziah beſides his impiety and idolatry until a fatal and ſudden rebuke, which had all the appearance of accident occaſioned his death and put an end to his reign, example, and impiety.

The roof of the Palace was flat and ſurrounded with a battlement, the King was leaning over it, and the rotten railing broke, he fell into the

Court-yard or garden of the Palace, and was ſorely hurt and bruiſed, while in anguiſh and torture Ahaziah ſent his ſervants, and directed them to conſult Baalzebub, the God of Ekron, reſpecting his recovery; Elijah the Prophet was ſent to meet the Meſſengers as they were on road, and to order them back to the Palace, with an expreſs anſwer to the King's enquiry, " Since he had ſent to the God of Ekron, and enquired of Baalzebub reſpecting his recovery, as if there had been no God in Iſrael, Ahaziah would come down from his bed only to his grave; upon the ſudden return of the Meſſengers the King enquired, why they were turned back before they could have reached Ekron, and they ſaid, a man had met them, who ſeemed well acquainted with their errand, and gave them the anſwer which they now delivered. Ahaziah aſked what ſort of a man he was? and they told him a hairy man, girt round with a leathern girdle, and the King knew him to be Elijah the Tiſhbite.

A Captain and his fifty, were inſtantly ordered to go bring the Prophet to the Palace, the Captain found him ſitting on a hill and by way of deriſion accoſted him, " Thou man of God come down, intimating if he refuſed, he would carry him by force. Elijah appealing to his own dignity and character, and ſeeing God's name and houour inſulted, he ſaid, if I be a man of God, let fire

come

come down from Heaven and conſume thee and thy fifty; God gave a proof to the honour of his Prophet, fire poured down from Heaven, and conſumed the Captain and all his men.

Again the King ſent another Captain with his fifty, and he diſcovered ſtill more petulance, and no appearance of terror at the awful example before him; Elijah returned the ſame anſwer, and fire came down from Heaven, and conſumed him and his fifty.

The King forwarded a third Captain and his fifty, and he fell on his knees before Elijah, expreſſed a reverence to his perſon and a dread of God's judgments, he prayed that his life and the lives of theſe fifty, his ſervants, might be precious in his ſight; Elijah was pleaſed with the reſpectful behaviour and mild diſpoſition of this Captain, he went down with him and his band to the Palace, and being uſhered in to the royal preſence, the Prophet with firmneſs and magnanimity delivered his very awful commiſſion.

" Foraſmuch as thou haſt ſent Meſſengers to enquire of Baalzebuh the God of Ekron; is it not, becauſe there is no God in Iſrael to enquire of his word? therefore thou ſhalt not come down off that bed on which thou lieſt, but ſhall ſurely die."

Ahaziah ſtruck with amazement and terror daunted by the preſence of the Prophet, and the ſentence he had announced, together with the late

proofs of the awful power of God, he ſilently gave Elijah a diſmiſſion; it was very ſoon after according to the Prophets prediction, King Ahaziah died, and as he had no Son was ſucceeded by his Brother Jehoram, Ahaziah had only reigned two years.

JEHORAM.

THIS Prince was proclaimed King of Iſrael in the year of the World, three thouſand one hundred and eight; and eight hundred and ninety-ſix years before the birth of our Saviour.

Jehoram aſcended the Throne of Iſrael in the eighteenth year of the reign of Jehoſophat in

Jeruſalem, and at the death of this truly, pious, and very excellent King, Judah and Iſrael moſt of all reſembled one Kingdom. One ſad ſcene of impiety and idolatry prevailed in both, and the two Kingdoms were governed by Kings of the ſame name.

Jehoram, King of Iſrael, principled from early life in all the abominations, and idol worſhip of his Mother Jezebel, the Daughter of the King of Sidon, was ſo altogether influenced by her advice, that ſhe may be ſaid to have governed his People, and exerciſed the Supreme Authority. Such impiety and unwiſe attachment brought down upon himſelf and upon all Iſrael the heavieſt judgments of Almighty God.

In the early part of Jehoram's reign, a friendly alliance took place between Iſrael, Judah, and Edom, and Jehoram led his Army out of Samaria to the Plains, appointed a general rendezvous, and numbered all Iſrael. From hence the King forwarded an Embaſſy to Jeruſalem, and aſked the aſſiſtance of Jehoſophat againſt Moab. David had added the two Kingdoms of Moab and Edom to his Empire, and when the diviſion and revolt took place between the two Kingdoms, Moab was adjoined to that of Iſrael, and Edom

to

to the Kingdom of Judah. Theſe tributary neighbours watched every opportunity of revolting, whenever Iſrael or the Kingdom of Judah were weakened or embarraſſed by wars at home or abroad.

Moab had refuſed her yearly tribute, ſhe had rebelled, and Jehoram applied to Jehoſophat for aid to compel the Moabites dutifully to return to their allegiance. The King very heartily gave his aſſent. " I am as thou art, my People thine, my horſes as thy horſes. Jehoſophat called a Council and enquired which way they ſhould go up, Jehoram's Council propoſed the the Army ſhould march through the Wilderneſs of Edom. By this means Jehoram was ſecuring the Alliance of Edom, and invading Moab on their weakeſt ſide, and where they leaſt expected an aſſault. A numerous Army aſſembled, and the Kings cautiouſly made a very wide circuit, which took them up ſeven days, travelling all this while, in the dry and ſandy Wilderneſs. The King of Edom and his Forces had now joined them, and this immenſe body of men, with the three Kings themſelves, were all of them very near loſt, over-fatigued, exhauſted and gaſping for want of water. Jehoram was paſſionately diſmayed, and he ſaid, God had called him,

and

and the Kings of Judah and Edom, to deliver them all three into the hands of Moab. Good Jehoſophat was ſorely diſtreſſed. and he enquired for a Prophet of the Lord. One of Jehoram's ſervant's told him, Eliſha, Son of Shaphat, he was here, Jehoſophat replied, he is a true Prophet.

The three Kings ſet out, and they walked down together to Eliſha's tent, engaging (as they hoped) by their condeſcention, the favour and aſſiſtance of the Prophet. On ſeeing Jehoram, Eliſha haſtily called out to him. "What have I "to do with thee? get thee to the calves thy Fa- "thers worſhipped, or to Baal, the God of thy "Mother," but the King replied, I am well aware you feel no reſpect for me, but pity good Jehoſophat and this innocent King of Edom, involved in the ſelf-ſame calamity with myſelf. Eliſha reſpectfully noticed Jehoſophat, whoſe piety and virtues he revered, and then directed them to dig trenches and ditches in the valley, after which (ſays the Prophet) they ſhall be full of water, ye and your cattle and your beaſts ſhall all drink; ſeeing them rejoice, with a pleaſing courteſy, Eliſha added, what you ſeem ſo delighted with, is comparatively a light thing, God will alſo deliver Moab into your hands. The very next morning, at the uſual hour of offering up prayers, water came by the way of Edom, and the Country was filled with water.

Not

Not dreaming of what had happened, the Moabites from the unuſual reflection of the Sun looking red on the water, thought of nothing but blood, ſurely ſay they, the three Kings muſt have butchered one another. Highly inſpirited one and all cried out, "Now Moab to the Spoil" without ſending any Spies, the Moabites raſhly all ruſhed forwards without any martial order even to the Camp of Iſrael, a moſt bloody battle enſued, a total overthrow. The King of Moab haſtily fled, and he was almoſt the only one who arrived at his Capital. The combined Armies purſued, and they took all the Cities of Moab, and ſtopped up all the Wells of the Country, and felled all their ſtately Trees, and laid regular Seige to Kir-haſareth the Metropolis. The Moabitiſh King, frantic and in deſpair, returning from a furious but unſucceſsful ſally, took his eldeſt Son, Heir to the Crown, ſlew him, and on the City Wall publickly offered him up a burnt-offering to ſecure (as he fooliſhly hoped) the favour of Chemoſh, his God.

The Iſraelites, ſhocked at the horrid and bloody fight, every man, full of diſtreſs, turned his back and ſilently and thoughtfully marched home-wards.

Some ſhort time after Jehoram's ſettlement at home, Benhadad King of Syria, held a council

of

of his Nobles, and propoſed to his People a new War with Iſrael. In a ſet ſpeech the King informed them of his plans, he would aſſemble his Forces, ſend out a ſtrong detachment to ſuch a place; he would ſuddenly ſeize upon the Iſraelites by ſurpriſe; and here (ſays the King) lying in ambuſh, they ſhall cut them all to pieces as they paſs. Eliſha the Prophet wrote a letter to Jehoram. "Beware thou paſs not "ſuch a place, for thither the Syrians are come "down," by this means, more than twice or thrice Benhadad's plans were broke, his plot detected, and by his wiſe and well-timed communications the Prophet always prevented the miſchief, for Jehoram ſent out his ſcouts and a troop of Guards to ſecure thoſe very paſſes before the Syrian ſoldiery could arrive. Benhadad was all wonder and aſtoniſhment, how his ſecret deſigns, and even his intentions could be known and fruſtrated. The Prince grew warm and jealous, all ſuſpicion and fury, he haſtily aſked, who among us is for Iſrael? and his Nobles anſwered him, my Lord O' King, none of us, thy ſervants are no ſpies; but Eliſha the Prophet that is in Iſrael, tells the King of Iſrael, the words that thou ſpeakeſt in thy bed-chamber. Benhadad highly enraged ordered out a Troop of Guards in ſearch of the Prophet. Eliſha was at Dothan, a ſmall City near Sechem. The

Syrian Guards ſurrounded the City, early in the morning at day-break they entered Dothan, and at the Prophet's prayer, by a ſudden blaze of light, God ſmote all the Troops with blindneſs. Eliſha came, he himſelf was their guide, and conducted them all into the City of Samaria; when thus entrapped and ſecured, the Prophet prays that their eyes might be opened, and behold they ſaw themſelves in the Capital City of Iſrael, encloſed by the Army and in view of the King. Jehoram ran eagerly up to Eliſha (and he cries out) " My Father—my Father—ſhall I ſmite " them? ſhall I ſmite them?" The Prophet anſwered No, Set bread and water before them that they may eat and drink, and go home to their maſter. It is againſt the laws of humanity to kill Captives, though thou haſt taken them with thy own ſword and bow, more unworthy ſtill, in cold blood, to kill theſe, whom not thy arms, but God's providence has put into thy hands. Refreſh and ſtrengthen them. Do good to your Enemies, Syria may return your kindneſs on the Iſraelitiſh Captives, and fear to oppoſe a People ſo humane, and thus invincibly protected.

Jehoram ordered a plentiful ſupply of proviſions to be ſet before them, a hoſpitable meal, and

and after they had eat and drank, the King ſent them all away.

Benhadad, notwithſtanding he had witneſſed ſo ſignal an interpoſition in favour of Iſrael, ſome time after, at the head of a very powerful Army, he entered Samaria and marched his Troops through all the Country, and ſurrounded the Metropolis, here he encamped, prevented all acceſs of proviſions, and totally blocked up the City of Samaria. As his coming was ſo rapid and unexpected, the inhabitants very numerous, and wholly unprovided for, a waſting and ſevere famine ſpeedily enſued. An aſſes head was ſold for eighty pieces of ſilver (near ten pounds) and a ſmall meaſure of tares for twelve ſhillings and ſix-pence (five ſhekels.) The People were all of them ſtarving, reduced to the greateſt extremity. As the King was taking a melancholy walk round the ramparts and the City Wall to watch his men, give his orders, and obſerve the motions of the Enemy, a diſtracted woman fell down at his feet and paid him homage, ſhe wrung her hands in agony, imploring juſtice—juſtice my Lord O' King. I have boiled and eat my child—this woman partook, on oath and ſolemn promiſe, ſhe for the next meal would cook her own. Behold my Lord O' King, this woman has hid her child and I am ſtarving.

So ſhocking a ſtory, and told with wildneſs, horror and deſpair, ſtruck Jehoram with the deepeſt diſtreſs. The King rent his clothes, and the rents diſcloſed the ſack-cloth underneath, thus publickly mourning; bitterly was Jehoram heard to ſigh, and he expreſſed the livelieſt ſorrow. His firſt burſt of paſſion fell upon the Prophet, and he vowed he would deſtroy him. One of his guard he inſtantly diſpatched to murder him. Eliſha was ſitting at home, reading his lectures, and the Elders his friends ſat with him. Shut, ſhut the door, cries the Prophet, hold it faſt. The King has ſent to murder me, and do not I hear his maſter's feet following after him? while he yet was talking, the Meſſenger and the King they both ruſhed in. This judgment (ſays Jehoram) is from God. He inflicts it. He will not remove it, Women are eating up their children. Why bidſt thou me wait on God for help? I am weary of waiting. Why wait longer? Eliſha convinced the King, of his own innocence, and forced from Jehoram an acknowledgment, that it was the rod of the Almighty, a juſt puniſhment for his own impiety and idolatry. The Prophet then ſtrikingly revived Jehoram, ſo large a ſupply (ſays he) of proviſion will be brought into the City, even as ſoon as to-morrow, that a buſhel of fine flour will then be ſold for five-pence, and two buſhel

of

of barley at the ſame price, at the publick market of Samaria.

That very night, ſtruck with terror and a dreadful panick, the Syrians imagined they heard the noiſe of horſes, rattling of chariot-wheels and a mighty Hoſt, they fled away for life in the utmoſt diſtraction, and left all their proviſion and baggage, even many of their horſes, their aſſes, and vaſt herds of cattle. So confuſed and terrified they ſtrewed all the road with cups and ſpoons, and garments, with veſſels and pots and trinkets they had droped.

The next morning ſo over-bounding was the plenty and the ſpoil, a buſhel of fine flour was ſold for a ſhekel, and two buſhel of barley for the ſame price, at the gate of Samaria.

Jehoram was leaning on one of his Nobles when the Prophet gave him the joyous news. The Noble Lord turned round to Eliſha ſneeringly diſcrediting the report, " the thing might " indeed be, if the Lord would make windows in " Heaven." The Prophet told him, thou ſhalt ſee it with thine eyes, but thou ſhall not taſte thereof.

That very Nobleman was appointed Steward of the Gate, he took all the proviſion in charge as it was bronght to the Market from the Camp, but ſo

riotous

riotous and tumultuous were the hungry croud, he was trod to death by the mob.

Four ſtarving Lepers, ſaid to be Gehazi and his three Sons, firſt diſcovered the flight of the Syrians, as their laſt recourſe rather than periſh they reſolved to venture even to beg at the Enemy's Camp. The loathſome diſeaſe made it death to enter the City, and they lodged in the Suburbs. Creeping nearer and nearer, great was their ſurprize, at finding every thing ſo quiet, and they could ſee nobody. They peeped into the tents, went from one to another, found them all full of proviſion and baggage and horſes and aſſes, after ſatisfying their own hunger, and pilfering and hiding what they liked, they bethought themſelves of carrying the joyful news to the City Gate, they firſt told the ſoldiers on guard, and they haſtened to tell it at the Palace.

Jehoram roſe at mid-night, the King reaſonably ſuſpected ſome ſtratagem, the Syrians might lie in ambuſh, and entice him and his hungry Army out of the Gates, and fall upon them in their ſtarved condition.

Jehoram ſummoned a council, cautiouſly ſent out his ſpies, and two horſes only, they examined the fact, could hear no tidings of the Enemy, every mark of a precipitate flight, and the King and his People rejoiced exceedingly.

Having

Having recruited and ſtrengthened his Army and Finances, Jehoram ſet out on a ſecond expedition to Ramoth-Gilead, and encountered Hazael the reigning Prince of Syria. Ahaziah Son of Jehoram, King of Judah, had lately aſcended the Throne of his Father, and Jehoram King of Iſrael invited him to accompany him to the ſiege. Enamoured of Glory, the young Prince readily entered into the confederacy. The exploit proved a fatal ſource of deſtruction to Jehoram's whole family and the death of both Monarchs. Jehoram took Ramoth-Gilead, he became Maſter of the City, but towards the end of the aſſault, the King received a dangerous wound, and was carried off, bleeding in his chariot, to his Palace at Jezreel. Jehoram committed the care of the City to Jehu, his Commander in Chief, and placed a ſtrong guard in the Citadel.

In the abſence of both Princes, the Prophet Eliſha was now directed to anoint Jehu, King of Iſrael, the Prophet was too well known to execute this Commiſſion in perſon, and he diſpatched in haſte to Ramoth Gilead, one of the young Prophets ordered him to inquire for Jehu Son of Nemſhi, General of the Forces, and retire with him to an inner chamber, then take out his box of oil, and anoint him King over

Iſrael.

Iſrael. The young Prophet was then to direct him, to go in perſon, and ſmite the whole family of Ahab, and expreſsly to tell Jehu, that in the portion of Jezreel, Dogs ſhould devour the blood of Jezebel, and there ſhould be none to bury her. With wonderful ſpeed the young Man executed his orders, when he arrived at the Town, the officers were aſſembled and ſitting in Council, he hurries into the Court, I have an errand to thee O' Captain. Jehu aſked, to which of us? and he ſaid, to thee O' Captain. Jehu aroſe, and they two, went into a back room together. The young Prophet inſtantly pulled out his box of oil, and anointed Jehu King of Iſrael, and delivered his highly awful meſſage, after which, he haſtily threw open the door, left the houſe and the City.

As ſoon as he was gone the company aſked, is all well? wherefore came this mad fellow here? we ſaw plainly by his geſture and carriage, there was ſomething of great importance in his Meſſage, I pray you tell us, and Jehu gravely ſaid, Thus and thus ſpake he, Thus ſaith the Lord, I have anointed thee, King over Iſrael. They all haſted, and took every man his Garment, and ſome they placed on the ſteps, and made him a Throne, and others they ſtrewed on the ground, for him to tread on. An eaſtern

ceremony

ceremony in token of great reverence (thus put we ourſelves and our property under thy feet) and inſtantly they blew the trumpets

" Jehu is King over Iſrael."

Jehu called a council of his Captains, enjoined them ſecrecy, and then mounted his chariot and drove furiouſly to Jezreel. The watchman on the high Tower, ſpied the Horſe-men and the chariots, and called out aloud, a troop of horſe, I ſee a company. The King ſent a Meſſenger full ſpeed to meet them, (and he ſaid) what news from Syria, is all peace? Jehu anſwered, what haſt thou to do with peace? get thee behind me. The King all impatience hurried away another Horſe-man, and again he aſks, is it peace? and Jehu replies to him, what haſt thou to do with peace? turn thou behind me. The watchman now cries out, the Meſſengers come not again, the driving is like the driving of Jehu, the Son of Nemſhi, for he driveth furiouſly. The King then ſaid, make ready, and his chariot was made ready. Jehoram and Ahaziah both mounted their chariots, and drove towards Jehu, and they met in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite. Jehoram there called out to Jehu, is all peace? Jehu anſwers, what peace, ſo long as the abominations of thy Mother, and her witch-crafts

are ſo many? hearing this, Jehoram fled, crying out O' Ahaziah; there is treachery—there is treachery. Jehu drew a bow with his full ſtrength, and ſmote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow pierced his heart, he inſtantly ſunk down in his chariot.

Jehu commanded Bidkar, the Captain of his Hoſt, to throw the dead body over the garden wall, into the Vine-yard that had once belonged to Naboth, and there to lie unburied.

Whilſt this was doing, Ahaziah fled by a private road, Jehu cried out, ſmite him, ſmite him, and he ordered him to be purſued. Ahaziah firſt fled to Megiddo, and thence to Samaria, he was here overtaken, and brought before Jehu at Jezreel. Jehu pronounced ſentence on the King, and it was executed at Megiddo, but he permitted the corpſe to be carried to Jeruſalem, and they buried Ahaziah in the Sepulchre of his Fathers.

Jehu, and a reſolute band, boldly marched up to the Palace. The Queen Mother, gorgeouſly attired and beautified with rouge, (thinking to awe Jehu by her Majeſty and preſence) placed herſelf at the Palace window, and when Jehu approached, with inſult, (though under great alarm) cried out, "Had Zimri peace, who ſlew "his maſter?" Jehu aſked, who is on my ſide? two or three pages of the bed-chamber, Eunuchs,

looked

looked out. Jehu ſaid, throw her down, Jehu was inſtantly obeyed. The Queen's blood was ſprinkled on the wall and on the horſes, Jehu trod her under foot, and the mangled body was torn to pieces. Jehu entered the Palace, and he both eat and drank, then calling to mind the bloody ſpectacle, ſee now (ſays he) for this curſed woman, for ſhe is a King's Daughter, go bury her, and they went out, and found only her ſcull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. Jehu told the men who brought them, this is the word of the Lord. " In the portion of Jezreel, " ſhall dogs eat the fleſh of Jezebel, and the car- " caſe of Jezebel ſhall be as dung in the field, even in Jezreel, they ſhall not be able to ſay, this is Jezebel.

Jehu ſat down and wrote letters to the Tutors, Nobles, Guardians and Elders who had the care of the young Princes, the blood royal, and the charge of their education, for the King foreſeeing the hazards of war, before he ſet out for Ramoth-Gilead to encounter the Syrians, placed all of them for ſafety in Samaria. Jehu wrote—

To the Elders of Iſrael in Samaria.

" *As ſoon as this letter cometh to you, ſeeing the* " *young Princes, the Sons and Grandſons of Ahab,* " *and all of the blood royal are with you, and ye* " *are in a fenced City, with chariots and horſes*

 " *and*

" *and much armour, look out him of all the* " *young Princes you think meeteſt, and ſet him on* " *the Throne of his Father, and fight for your* " *Maſter's houſe.*"

Thus Jehu was making trial of their loyalty, ſignifying his own intentions, and endeavouring to terrify them into compliance. But the Nobles and Guardians together with the Elders of the City, were highly intimidated, ſeeing Jehu had already murdered two Kings and the Queen Dowager, and that he held the command of all the powers and forces of the land, they had no courage to oppoſe him, but returned a dutiful and moſt ſubmiſſive anſwer, referring themſelves, their City, and all the young Princes wholly to his mercy.

Having witneſſed their cowardice and made a trial of their ſubmiſſion, Jehu ſat down and wrote letters to them a ſecond time.

" *Bring hither in baſkets, the heads of all* " *the young Princes in Samaria, and before this* " *time to-morrow.*

The bloody preſent was brought that very night to the Palace at Jezreel, and Jehu (as it was late) gave orders to have them carried back

back to the ſeſſions-houſe, the high Court of Judicature at Samaria, and there to pile them up in heaps. The heads of no leſs than ſeventy young Princes were thus publickly expoſed and laid in two bloody and ſeparate heaps as Jehu had commanded.

Early the next morning the Elders, Nobles and Magiſtrates preſented themſelves in a body on the ſame ſpot. Jehu, ſurrounded by his Guards, went out to meet them, and they all ſtood at the high gate of Samaria. Jehu in a ſet ſpeech, firſt addreſſed the Magiſtrates and Elders, (and he ſaid)

" Ye are righteous in your own eyes, and " look on me as a traitor, a rebel, and a mur- " derer—I acknowledge I have killed my maſter. " But if I am guilty, are ye innocent? I have " killed One. Ye a greater number." Jehu then " turned himſelf to the People, and he ſaid,

" Whatever is amiſs in all you ſee, I acquit ye " as innocent and harmleſs. Fear not ye the ven- " geance of God, nor the curſes of men. The " truth is, neither I nor they, are to be blamed. " This is not the work of man, but of God."

After this, Jehu ſlew all that remained of the blood royal and Family of Ahab in Iſrael, until he left none to deſtroy.

JEHU.

J E H U.

WITH wonderful dispatch, and undaunted courage, this valiant Chief had executed the commands of the Prophet, the just and awful vengeance of the Almighty, and thus by extirpating root and branch of the house of Ahab, in the year of the World, three thousand one hundred and twenty; and eight hundred and eighty-four years before the birth of Christ, obtained a secure possession of the Crown, and ascended the Throne of Israel.

Jehu kept his Court at Samaria, and not long after his establishment, at a sheep-shearing feast, the King met, as they were on the road, the Brethren of Ahaziah, the late King of Judah, unknowing any thing of what had happened, they were coming to Samaria to pay their respects to the royal family. Jehu calls to his guard—these

Men are my Priſoners—take them alive. Jehu then commanded them to be led to the pit of the ſheep-ſhearing houſe, (the place where he intended to bury them) and there he ordered them to be ſlain even two and forty men. They were of the houſe of Ahab by the Mothers ſide, and Nephews of Ahaziah; Jehu thought they might revenge the death of their relations, and in right of their Grand-mother, lay claim to the Kingdom of Iſrael. Going home from hence, the King met Jehonadab, a man of great eminence and piety, he was a Kenite, and a lineal deſcendant of Jethro. Jehonadab, was purpoſely coming to Court, to congratulate his Majeſty, Jehu ſtopped his chariot and ſaluted him, and he ſaid, is thy heart right, as my heart is with thine? Jehonadab anſwered, it is. Jehu (in token of affection) ſays, give me thine hand, come up into my Chariot, witneſs yourſelf my actions, ſee my Zeal for God, and my deſire to fulfil his commands; the ſervants opened the door, Jehonadab was lifted in, and they drove on to Samaria.

The King iſſued out a proclamation, and under pretence of great ſanctity, and religious Zeal and homage to Baal, he ſaid, Ahab ſerved Baal a little, Jehu ſhall ſerve him much, and the King aſſembled all his numerous Prieſts, Prophets and Votaries to a ſolemn ſacrifice, he himſelf commanded them religiouſly to offer up to Baal,

and

and they were ſummoned to meet in the magnificent Temple of their God. Not one of all the Prieſts, Prophets, or worſhippers of Baal were at this pompous ceremony to be abſent, the penalty was death. As ſoon as the Temple courts and all were full, Jehu cautiouſly went round himſelf and Jehonadab accompanied him. The King cries out, ſee carefully if there be none of the ſervants of the Lord, whether there be only preſent the worſhippers, Prophets and Prieſts of Baal—The King and Jehonadab then came out, and Jehu placed a Guard, of eighty Soldiers, all round the Temple, and now (ſays the King) he of you that letteth any one go, his life ſhall be for the life of him. In the midſt of their ſolemn worſhip, juſt while they were offering up their ſacrifices to Baal, Jehu ſent in a Captain and his Guard, who ruſhed in upon the worſhippers, and put them every one to death. The King then deſtroyed, all the objects of their worſhip, demoliſhed the image of Baal, collected together all their other Idols, Relicts and Altars, and burnt them before all the People, after which he laid all their publick buildings, and the celebrated Temple itſelf in aſhes, and made the place a draught houſe or common ſewer.

Jehu

Jehu followed the directions given him by the Prophet, as far as he judged his intereſt would permit, his miſtaken policy got the better of his religion. Jehu adhered to the worſhip of the golden calves, and commanded all Iſrael to repair on feſtivals and ſolemn ſeaſons to Dan or Bethel, where they were publikly worſhipped, nevertheleſs, on account of the zeal and readineſs he had ſhewn, in executing the judgments ſo awfully denounced againſt the houſe of Ahab, the Crown of Iſrael was entailed on his Family, to the fourth generation.

Jehu's obedience, thus wanted, what would have made it moſt of all valuable, ſincerity, his continuance in the practiſe of one ſpecies of idolatry, is alledged, as a fair proof of his falſe-heartedneſs in others, it was only partial, and it is ſaid of Jehu, he took no heed to walk in the way of the God of Iſrael, with all his heart.

Hazael, who had ſo baſely murdered Benhadad, and uſurped the Crown of Syria, ravaged and haraſſed the borders of Iſrael, the Syrians were making daily incurſions into the Country, laying waſte all within their reach, from the banks of the River Jordan even to the ſea-ſhore the territories of Gilead, Reuben, Gad and Manaſſeh. Jehu was unweariedly employed in defending his People, driving out the Enemy,

and repairing the breaches and damages they were perpetually incurring.

After a reign of eight and twenty years, this brave and warlike Prince died in Samaria, his Capital, and was buried in the royal Sepulchre. Jehoahaz his eldeſt Son aſcended the Throne and was proclaimed inſtantly throughout Iſrael.

JEHOAHAZ.

THIS young Prince was crowned in Samaria, in the year of the World, three thouſand one hundred and forty-eight; and eight hundred and fifty-ſix years before the birth of our Saviour.

Joaſh, Son of Ahaziah, King of Judah, was at this time in the three and twentieth year of his reign.

3148.

The calamities of his Country, had no effect in reclaiming Jehoahaz, he was an Idolater, and like all his Predeceſſors, could not think of countenancing any of his ſubjects in going up to Jeruſalem three times a year, at their high feſtivals, as they were at firſt intended to have done. The ſplendour of the City and the Temple, the attractions of the Prieſts and the Levites, the meeting of friends and acquaintance, might conduce to ſettle many differences, and form an alliance injurious and deſtructive to his Government. The King therefore adhered to the religion and policy of his Father, and directed his People to repair, at ſuch ſeaſons, to Dan and Bethel, the two Cities, at the extremities of his Kingdom, where Jeroboam had unwiſely ſet up the golden calves, and introduced a worſhip ſimilar to what he had always witneſſed in Egypt.

The grove alſo in Samaria which Ahab had planted, and which had been dedicated to the worſhip of Baal ſtill remained, and God had expreſsly commanded that it ſhould be deſtroyed.

Such conduct and omiſſions were ſignally noticed, God is ſaid to have been angry with Jehoahaz, and Hazael King of Syria, and afterwards Benhadad his Son made daily depredations and ravages on the borders of Iſrael, and from time to time Syria laid waſte all the Country. At length on the King's dutiful and ſubmiſſive re-

return and penitential ſorrow, together with the publick and ſolemn humiliation of all his People, God had compaſſion on Iſrael, mercifully called to mind the covenant with ſome of his pious Predeceſſors, and ſent them a deliverance, but not in the reign of their preſent Prince, it was deferred to that of his Son Jehoaſh, and not completed until the following reign, under Jeroboam the ſecond, great Grandſon of Jehu.

By ſo many waſting ravages and deſtructive invaſions, Iſrael was at laſt ſo exhauſted and haraſſed by Syria, Jehoahaz was reduced to only fifty horſemen, ten chariots, and ten thouſand foot Soldiers, and the ſufferings and very heavy yoke the King laboured under, made his life and reign moſt troubleſome and miſerable.

Jehoahaz lived ſeventeen years after he had aſcended the Throne of Iſrael, at which time he died and was buried in the royal Sepulchre in Samaria, and ſucceeded by Jehoaſh his Son.

JEHOASH.

JEHOASH.

IN the year of the World, three thouſand one hundred and ſixty-five, and eight hundred and thirty-nine years before the birth of Chriſt. Jehoaſh was crowned at Samaria, King of Iſrael.

The firſt action recorded of this young Prince, and a very amiable one, is, a reſpectful viſit he paid to the Prophet Eliſha, when he had long been bowed down with age and infirmities, and he gave a pleaſing proof of an unaffected and pious concern, and ſhed a flood of tears, at the near approach of the death of ſo wiſe a Prophet, and ſo holy and good a man. The Prince pleaſingly endeavours to comfort and revive the good old Prophet, by reminding Eliſha, of his

own words, at parting with his friend the Prophet Elijah, and the awful Majeſty exhibited on that ever memorable event, " O' my Father— " my Father, the chariot of Iſrael and the horſe- " men thereof," thus recalling the memory of Elijah, his good counſels, and prayers, by which he had procured them ſuch glorious victories. The Prophet warmly felt the King's kindneſs, and all he was doing, with a highly pleaſing courteſy, (enjoying the honours) Eliſha in return told him of his future ſucceſſes againſt his enemies. He ſhould engage the Syrians in three pitched battles, and come off Conqueror in them all. The Prophet very fancifully ſpeaks to the King by action." Take Bow and Arrows. Open the window eaſtward (where the Syrians were ravaging) and ſhoot. Now ſays the Prophet thou ſhalt ſmite Syria, at Aphek, till thou haſt conſumed it. This was the firſt ſign, and it was to foretel his victories over Syria. The ſecond had a reference to the number of them. Again the Prophet ſays, take Arrows and ſmite on the ground. The King humoured the Old Prophet and he ſmote thrice, and then ſtopped. Eliſha was paſſionately diſappointed, Thou ſhouldeſt have ſmitten five or ſix times, then hadſt thou ſmote Syria till thou hadſt conſumed it, whereas now, thou wilt ſmite Syria only thrice, for God had ſignified to the Prophet, that the

number

number of the victories, ſhould correſpond with the number of the Kings ſtrokes.

Jehoaſh was however ſo much encouraged, by the predictions of the good old Man, that with great ſpirit he engaged Benhadad the Syrian Prince, in three pitched battles, routed him, drove him out of the country, and retook all the Cities, Hazael, his Father, had taken from Iſrael during the unhappy reign of Jehoahaz.

While Jehoaſh was enjoying his Victories over Syria, he received a very extraordinary letter and Challenge from the King of Judah. Amaziah elated with his ſucceſs againſt Edom, returned home in triumph to Jeruſalem, and as he was paſſing on the road, he heard of the inſults and injuries done by the Iſraelites, to the towns and villages, through which they marched, after their diſmiſſion and diſappointment in not ſharing the ſpoil and conqueſt of Edom, in revenge for the affront the King ſent by his Ambaſſadors to the Court of Samaria, a challenge to Jehoaſh, and He wrote.

" Come let us look one another in the " face,"

Jehoaſh treated the inſult with haughty deriſion and contempt, and his anſwer to Amaziah was couched in Sovereign ſcorn.

" The thiſtle that was in Lebanon, ſent to the " Cedar that was in Lebanon, ſaying, give thy " Daughter

" Daughter to my Son to Wife, and there paſſed " by a wild beaſt and trod down the thiſtle." Thus I tread down thee—my Army thine—Thou haſt ſmitten Edom, be content with thy glory tarry at home, why meddle to thy hurt? why fall, even thou, and Judah with thee? Amaziah, ſelf-confident, in the hour of victory, and fired with the inſult, marched his whole Army to Beth-ſhemeſh, and there met Jehoaſh and the Iſraelites. A bloody battle was fought, Amaziah was totally defeated, his Army all routed, the King himſelf taken Priſoner, and Jehoaſh led his ſpirited Troops through all his Country, took poſſeſſion of Jeruſalem, and King Amaziah diſgracefully followed ſorrowing at the heels of the Conqueror. Jehoaſh cauſed four hundred cubits of its ſtrong walls from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, and its towering fortifications to be broke down, plundered the Temple of its richeſt treaſures, and the royal Palaces, then laden with his ſpoils, and taking with him ſuch hoſtages as he himſelf choſe, Jehoaſh marched his Army back to Samaria, enjoying the high honours of a ſecond triumph.

After a reign of near ſeventeen years, the two firſt of which were in the life-time of his Father, King Jehoaſh died and they buried him in the royal Sepulchre.

JEROBOAM

JEROBOAM II.

THIS Prince was the Son of Jehoaſh, and great Grandſon of Jehu. Jeroboam ſucceeded his Father and was proclaimed King of Iſrael, in the year of the World, three thouſand one hundred and eighty-one; and eight hundred and twenty-three years before Chriſt, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Amaziah King of Judah.

This young Prince had during the laſt ten years ſhared the Government with his Father, and he reigned one and forty years afterwards. Two very eminent characters, both Prophets, were his contemporaries, Jonah the Son of Amittai who was of Gath-hepher, and the Prophet Hoſea, and Jeroboam valiantly executed the noble work which they had both ſo ſignally encouraged him to undertake.

The Prophets Jonah and Hoſea foretold he would complete the deliverance of Iſrael from the Tyranny of Syria, which his Father though an Idolatrous Prince, had with great courage and bravery begun. Jeroboam took Damaſcus the Capital of that Empire, and reſtored the Coaſt of Iſrael from the entering of Hamath, which was its northern border unto the Dead Sea, once a goodly plain and built with famous Cities, the boundary of Iſrael to the ſouth. Jeroboam poſſeſſed himſelf of all the territories between, and greatly advanced the glory of his Country.

We have ſadly to lament the loſs of the hiſtory, and gallant atchievements of this enterprizing Prince together with the book of the Annals of the Kings of Iſrael.

In the forty-firſt year of his reigning alone, this highly ſpirited and warlike Prince died, Jeroboam ſlept with his Fathers, even with the Kings of Iſrael, and they buried him in the City of Samaria.

ZECHARIAH

ZECHARIAH.

THIS Prince aſcended the Throne of Iſrael and ſucceeded his Father, Jeroboam the ſecond, in the year of the World, three thouſand two hundred and thirty-three; and ſeven hundred and ſeventy-one years before Chriſt, in the thirty-eighth year of the reign of Uzziah King of Judah.

After the death of Jeroboam there had been an inter-regnum of eleven years, before this Prince his Son, was crowned at Samaria.

Zechariah was an Idolater, and it is expreſsly ſaid of him, as of all the reſt, he departed not from the ſins of his Predeceſſors, continued to adhere to the worſhip of the golden calves, commanding all his People to go up to the Cities of Dan or Bethel, to which-ever of them beſt ſuited their convenience for that purpoſe.

After Zechariah had reigned ſix months, he was openly in the publick ſtreets maſſacred by

SHALLUM.

This Prince was one of Zechariah's own domeſtics. Shallum ſeized upon the Crown of Iſrael and was proclaimed in Samaria.

Shallum well knew the promiſe made to Jehu extended to the fourth generation only, and he found the People diſaffected, ripe for a revolt, and favourable to his attempt.

Shallum reigned a month of days (thirty) at which time he was himſelf murdered by

MENAHEM.

In the nine and thirtieth year of Uzziah, King of Judah.

Menahem was a General-Officer and the Son of Gad. This Prince alſo uſurped the Throne of Iſrael; his place of reſidence and where he kept his Court was Tirzah, in the tribe of Ephraim. The Palace had been originally built by Jeroboam, the firſt King of Iſrael. On Menahem's approach the Citizens of Tiphſah, the Elders and magiſtrates ſhut the City gates againſt him and refuſed to acknowledge and proclaim him their Sovereign; this ſpirited and bloody Prince, inſtantly put all the inhabitants of the Country to

the ſword, from the City Tiphſah, even to the City of Tirzah, and all the women with child he ripped up, by cruelty and ſuch horrid ſeverity he was thus terrifying his ſubjects into obedience, committing on all ranks and orders of People the moſt wanton barbarities, private aſſaſſinations and publick executions.

It was not long after his ſettlement at Tirzah that Pul, King of Aſſyria, invaded Iſrael, and Menahem was ſo unable to oppoſe him, that he forwarded an Embaſſy and ſued for mercy, at the enormous price of a thouſand talents of ſilver, Menahem purchaſed a preſent deliverance, and in order to pay the ranſom he levied a heavy tax of fifty ſhekels per head, on each of his wealthy ſubjects.

The cruelty of this bloody Tyrant was ſo far from eſtabliſhing him as he expected, that it weakened, endangered, and forced him to ſeek out foreign aſſiſtance and even to ſue to an Enemy. After the Aſſyrian Monarch had marched his Troops out of Samaria, Menahem reigned about ten years, and then died at Tirzah, and they proclaimed his Son Pekaliah, King of Iſrael.

PEKALIAH.

PEKALIAH.

THIS Prince aſcended the Throne in the year of the World, three thouſand two hundred and forty-four; and ſeven hundred and ſixty years before Chriſt.

After he had reigned two years, Pekaliah was murdered in his Palace by Pekah one of his General Officers.

3244.

PEKAH

THIS Officer was the Son of Remaliah. Pekah ſeized upon the Crown of Iſrael and was proclaimed in the year of the World, three

thouſand

thouſand two hundred and forty ſix; ſeven hundred and fifty-eight years before the birth of our Saviour, and in the fifty-ſecond year of the reign of Uzziah King of Judah.

In the Palace of the Kings houſe, Pekah formed a conſpiracy with Argob and Arieh two Officers of the Houſehold and they were his aſſiſtants in perpetrating the treaſon. Here Pekah murdered Pekaliah, and he took with him fifty Men of the Gileadites whom he had hired and enliſted in the buſineſs.

Pekah was a moſt wicked, and abandoned Prince, and walked in all the abominations of his Predeceſſors. Iſrael was during his reign again invaded by Aſſyria, Tiglath-pileſer entered it with a powerful Army, and he took Ijon, and a city of Ephraim and two cities of Naphthali and Gilead and Galilee, Gities and parts of Iſrael the neareſt to Aſſyria, and the Aſſyrian Prince carried all the inhabitants Captive to Halah, and Habor to people deſolate countries, even as far as the river Gozan.

A reign unhappy and ſo inglorious ended in a violent death, Pekah was murdered by Hoſhea the Son of Elah.

3246.

Pekah

Pekah had reigned twenty years, after his death there was an Anarchy, and general confuſion took place for near nine years, during all which time Hoſhea was ſtrenuouſly endeavouring to get himſelf ſettled in the Government. A revolution very diſtaſteful, and much objected to by the Iſraelites, but at length

HOSHEA

Procured influence enough to raiſe a powerful party in his favour, and they proclaimed him King of Iſrael, in the year of the World, three thouſand two hundred and ſeventy-five; and ſeven hundred and twenty-nine years before Chriſt, in the twelfth year of the reign of Ahaz, King of Judah.

So much was this Prince deſpiſed, that after his coronation Hoſhea found it a very difficult matter indeed, to ſupport any royalty or ſtation whatever.

In his principals and religious practiſes Hoſhea was not equally Idolatrous with the Kings who had reigned before him, for he did not worſhip Baal, nor compel his People to go up to the Cities of Dan and Bethel and worſhip the Golden Calves Jeroboam had ſet up, the one indeed, that which was fixed up at Dan, had been demoliſhed before his Government took place and Hoſhea iſſued out no proclamation for-

bidding

bidding his ſubjects going up to worſhip at Jeruſalem, and yet the meaſure of their Iniquity is ſaid to have been full, and the moſt tremendous Judgments and ſore Vengeance of the Almighty ſoon followed, without a remedy or poſſibility of eſcape. Iſrael had ſinned, and worſhipped Baal, in conformity to the laws and cuſtoms of the Heathen, had bowed down to Idols and worſhipped the Golden calves, under every green-tree had ſet up molten Images, and planted Groves in the High places, and burnt incenſe there, thus they rejected his ſtatutes, followed vanity, worſhipped all the hoſt of Heaven, cauſed their Sons and Daughters to paſs through the fire, uſing divinations and enchantments and ſelling themſelves to do evil. Over and over again, God had bore teſtimony againſt them, warning them by his Prophets and Seers, by extraordinary revelations and Viſions, by ſignal miracles, tried them by Severity, puniſhed them, delivered them into the hands of ſpoilers, inviting them by clemency when they ſhewed a diſpoſition to Penitence, and uſing (but in vain) every means of reclaiming.

Hoſhea was laying many Schemes in order to free himſelf and his ſubjects from Aſſyrian bondage, he grew remiſs in his payment of the tribute money, and for ſome ſhort time altogether omitted it. Shalmaneſer the Aſſyrian

Prince noticed it, and Hoſhea was alarmed, he ſwore Fealty, promiſed inſtantly to make up his payments; but the King detected Hoſhea in ſome ſecret conſpiracy againſt him, and found he had ſent Meſſengers and preſents to Egypt, though he had omitted the payment even of his juſt dues and tribute to Aſſyria, ſuch as he had before done year by year. Shalmaneſer ſoon broke all his meaſures plots and deſigns, at the head of a formidable Army he entered Samaria, levelled and ravaged Cities and Country, laying waſte all the lands of Iſrael. Shalmaneſer marched his Troops up to the Gates of the Capital, and ſat down before it, encamping a numerous Army all round its Walls and formed a total brockade.

Hoſhea had made all the Preparations in his power, he had ſtrongly fortified Samaria, brought into it large ſtores of Ammunition and Proviſion, and the City held out almoſt three years againſt ſo powerful and enterprizing a Rival; at laſt Samaria was compelled to ſurrender; King and Subjects were made Priſoners, and they were all carried away Captive into Aſſyria, in the ninth year of the reign of Hoſhea.

The ſad hiſtory and diſtreſs of King and People is deſcribed in the moſt pathetic language of miſery and diſtraction, horrid indeed were the cruelties practiſed by the Conquerors over the Perſons, Families, young Princes, Children, Infants

fants yet unborn as well as born, thus prematurely butchered with their parents. The City of Samaria, its Palaces, and ſtately buildings, became a heap of rubbiſh, the Country was laid waſte, and the Aſſyrians returned home laden with all the ſpoil of Iſrael.

Of the Country into which they were carried captive, no tract can be ſeen, no very probable conjecture ever formed.

This is the ſad, and fatal end of the Iſraelitiſh Empire, after it had been ſeparated from that of Judah, and ſtood a divided Kingdom, two hundred and fifty-four years.

Of the Iſraelites who were happy enough, by flight or concealment to eſcape butchery or captivity, ſome arrived in Egypt, and ſome forſaking their rebellious principles and idolatry became ſubjects to good King Hezekiah and his ſucceſſors, inhabitants of Judah. All the reſt were carried away to people uninhabited territories, widely diſtant from the land of Canaan, and placed on the deſolate frontiers of Halah, and in Habor by the River Gozan, and ſome in the mountainous and dreary parts of Medea, perſecuted, enſlaved, and condemned to end their days in miſery, ſorrow, and bondage.

The Aſſyrian Conqueror afterwards peopled the Cities of Iſrael with the inhabitants of Cuthah, and Ava, Hamath and Sepharvaim, Nations he had

brought under his yoke, and theſe People uniting together ſoon revolted and elected a King of their own.

A ſtrange medley of religion now took place and laſted about three hundred years, at which time the celebrated Temple was built on Mount Gerizim, and this union of Nations and People henceforward took upon them the name of SAMARITANS.

ON THE BOOKS OF THE KINGS.

A SHORT RECAPITULATION OF THE HISTORY.

THE firſt book concludes the life of David, gives his wiſe directions and charge to his Son Solomon, perſuaſive exhortations to piety and right conduct, and the King's laſt advice reſpecting two State Priſoners, Joab and Shimei.

By the expreſs command of David, Solomon is anointed, and publickly proclaimed King of Iſrael

Iſrael by Zadoc, the High-Prieſt, and Nathan the Prophet, and the eleven firſt Chapters of the firſt book, record his proſperous, moſt aſtoniſhingly glorious, peaceful, and happy reign.

After the death of Solomon, Rehoboam, his Son, at the age of forty, inſtantly ſet out for Sechem, a City in the tribe of Ephraim, almoſt the centre of the Kingdom, with the Princes, his Heads and Elders, his Nobles and all his Court, there to receive the honours of his Coronation. A vaſt body of his People here aſſembled, and as they thought themſelves oppreſſed and overburthened with very heavy taxes, before they paid him homage, and admitted his proclamation by ſound of trumpet, they humbly offered him up a petition for a redreſs of their grievances.

Rehoboam, upon this, ſummoned a Council from among the Elders, the Privy Counſellors of his Father, they gave their opinion unanimouſly for its being granted, aſſuring the Prince he would thereby gain and ſecure the affections and loyalty of his People for ever. Rehoboam next formed a Council, from among the young men, who were grown up with him, and they well knowing the vanity and pride of the Prince, flattered his paſſions by yielding to his wiſhes, and unwiſely adviſed him to return a moſt haughty and inſulting anſwer to the petition of his People,

" my

" my little finger ſhall be thicker than my Fa-
" ther's loins; my Father chaſtiſed you with
" whips, I will chaſtiſe you with ſcorpions"
(laſhes ended with iron)—upon which ten tribes out of the twelve, inſtantly revolted from Rehoboam. The Prince ſorely alarmed haſtily fled to his chariot for ſafety, and drove off full ſpeed to the Capital.

The ten revolting Tribes, blew the trumpets and inſtantly proclaimed Jeroboam, King of Iſrael.

Ever afterwards the Kingdom remained thus divided. Rehoboam was crowned at Jeruſalem, and he aſſumed the title of King of Judah.

The two Tribes of Benjamin and Judah were henceforward united.

The poſterity of David, in this laſt diviſion, reigned three hundred and ſeventy-two years, during which period, nineteen Kings ſucceeded one another, with only one interruption, which laſted ſix years, Athaliah Queen Dowager and Mother of Ahaziah, having at that time uſurped the Throne of Judah.

The Kingdom of Iſrael continued only two hundred and thirty-ſeven years, and their Kings were all Idolaters, which occaſioned that ſtriking Propheſy reſpecting them,

" They ſhould be as reeds ſhaken in the water."

The Hiſtory of Judah, and Iſrael, during the ſpace of one hundred and eighteen years is recorded,

corded in the firſt Book, it gives the reigns of the four firſt Kings of Judah, ending with the death of Jehoſophat, and alſo the reigns of the eight firſt Kings of Iſrael. This Book alſo relates the awful, intereſting, and inſtructive lives, and characters, of the Prophet Elijah and Eliſha.

The ſecond book of the Kings, contains the remaining Hiſtory of the Reigns in Judah and Iſrael, to the Captivity and deſtruction of both Kingdoms; that of Iſrael is continued, from the rebellion of Moab, in the reign of Ahaziah, to the Captivity and final diſperſion of Iſrael, among the Cities of the Medes, and the deſolate and uninhabited Countries of Halah and Habor, in the Reign of Hoſhea, the laſt King of Iſrael; a period of only one hundred and fifty-nine years, as the Kingdom of Judah remained alone a hundred and thirty five years after Iſrael.

The Hiſtory of Judah, is here continued from the death of Jehoſophat, to the Captivity in Babylon, under the reign of Zedekiah, a ſpace of two hundred and forty-four years.

The laſt chapter relates the ſiege and ſore Famine occaſioned thereby, thoſe, who were ſlain by the ſword, were happier far, than thoſe who pined to death with hunger. On the ninth day, of the fourth month, after a blockade of more than two years, this ſtrong Hold of Zion, an

almoſt

almoſt impregnable Fort was taken by ſtorm, and while a breach was made at one end of the City, and the Chaldeans kept pouring in their chariots and their men through a private gate at a diſtance, which led to the King's garden, many of the inhabitants, and the Army eſcaped by flight; and at the dead of night, Zedekiah himſelf, with a few of his Nobles, and his Body-Guard, ſtole out by ſome very private road and reached the plains of Jericho, the Chaldees, ever on the watch, ſpied them out, and diſpatched a party to ſeize them, they were ſoon brought to the Camp, and ſent under a guard to Riblah, the head-quarters of Nebuchadnezer, and uſhered in to the royal Preſence, the King ſummoned a Council, Zedekiah was brought before them, and convicted of treachery and rebellion. Immediately after, they called in all his children, one by one, and executed them in his preſence, they then ſtruck out both the eyes of the Father, that no one object whatever might efface the bloody ſcene, or the ſad idea and remembrance of it for ever. Zedekiah blind, and bound in fetters of braſs, was then led away a State Priſoner to Babylon, to grace the triumph of this mercileſs Tyrant, and pine out a miſerable exiſtence in a dungeon.

In the fifth month after, a Chaldee Officer, Nebuzar-adan, arrived from Babylon, and was commiſſioned to burn to aſhes the royal Palace,

and the houſes of the Nobles, after plundering them of all that could be ſent off, and he burnt the whole City, and this ſuperb and magnificent Temple, the ornament and glory of the world, after they had firſt ſtripped and plundered it of all its treaſures, cut off from their ſtands the golden veſſels, pulled down the brazen pillars, cut to pieces the brazen ſea, and forwarded all the ſpoil to Babylon. All Judah were now carried away into Captivity, a few of the poor only were left, to dreſs the vines and cultivate the land.

Gedaliah, a friend of the Prophet Jeremiah, obtained the appointment of Judæa, and the new Governor kept his Court at Mizpah. The Prophet was here ſupplied, by him, with all neceſſaries, and many of the Jewiſh Chiefs and Princes, who had fled during the ſiege, came alſo to Gedaliah, and he ſware to them, and ſpoke kindly, fear not ye, dwell peaceably in the land, ſerve the King of Babylon, and it ſhall be well with you. Amongſt others, Iſhmael a Prince of the blood royal, and ten of his reſolute companions, were all of a party and on a viſit at the Governor's houſe; while they were hoſpitably received as gueſts, and entertained at a feaſt he had made for them, they baſely murdered Gedaliah, and all the brave Chaldæans of his Court.

On this treacherous aſſaſſination, the Jews who had placed themſelves under his friendly protection, now fled away to Egypt, and the Prophet Jeremiah was amongſt the number.

After this time the land is ſaid to have lain deſolate, the Sabbatic year had been much neglected, but throughout Judæa the land now kept a very long and perpetual Sabbath.

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viii	For dignities, read dignity.	xv	For wollen, read woollen.
xiv	offender, read offerer.	xix	occuring, read occurring.

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5	For hoſpitallity, read hoſpitality.	271	intered, read interred.
23	fateſt, read fatteſt.	344	give, read gave.
28	enchanted, read enchanting.	370	the me, read the time.
34	gratefu, read gratefully.	372	ark, read arch.
41	ambigituy, read ambiguity.	377	forreſt, read foreſt.
82	fulfiling, read fulfilling.	447	King Babylon, read King of Babylon.
124	ſtrickingly, read ſtrikingly.	552	on road, read on the road.
131	thee, read three.	532	ſent to murder me, read ſent a Meſſenger to murder me.
152	known, read know.		
220	melancholly, r. melancholy.		
242	For advancing, read advanced.		

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12	After and, read Cyrus.	145	Barillus, read Batillus
23	ſacond, read ſecond.	343	Belſhazzar, read Belteſhazzar.
50	meployed, read employed.	344	Ditto, Ditto.
73	Privildges read Privileges.	373	them the, read them in the
112	inſtance, read inſtant.		